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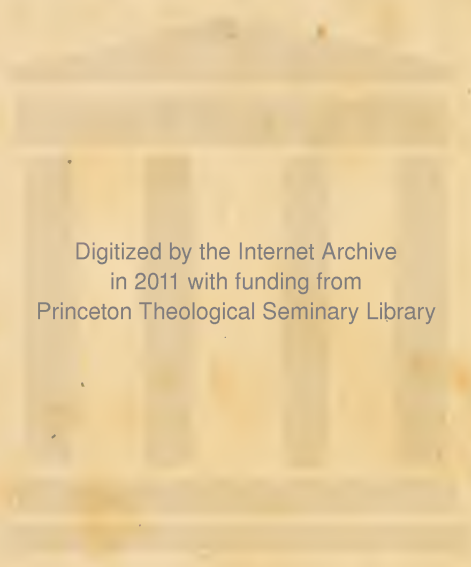
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LETTERS

ON THE

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

OF THE

NEW HAVEN THEOLOGY.

From a New England Minister to one at the South.


*By Rev. B. Tyler.*

NEW YORK.

ROBERT CARTER AND EZRA COLLIER.

M DCCC XXXVII.

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## PREFACE.

THE circumstances which have led to the publication of this little volume, are the following: In the month of February, 1837, the author received a letter from a distinguished clergyman in one of the Southern States, requesting some information respecting the origin and progress of the New Divinity in New England. He probably expected no more than a single letter, in reply. The author, however, in attempting to answer his inquiries, soon perceived that he could not give the desired information in a single letter. He accordingly concluded to write a series of letters, and commit them to the disposal of his correspondent, who judged it expedient to give them to the public through the press. They were first published in the Southern Christian Herald, and have been copied into several other papers in different parts of the country. The interest excited by them is far greater than was anticipated by the writer. They are now collected into a volume, at the earnest request of many who have read them, and with the hope that they may contribute something to the cause of truth.

The object of these letters, is to give a brief, but faithful account of what has sometimes been denominated the New Haven controversy. Considering the

interest awakened by this controversy, it is obviously important that its history should be known ; and that the points of doctrine involved in it, should be clearly understood. And this is the more important at the present time, on account of the pains which have been taken to make the impression that the New Haven Divinity is New England Divinity, and in this way to excite prejudice in the Presbyterian church against the whole of New England. Several of the last letters in the series, are intended to set this matter in its true light. By a comparison of the writings of the New Haven divines with those of the standard theological writers of New England, it is shown, that they not only do not harmonize, but are widely at variance ; and that in relation to fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

In revising these letters, the writer has made some slight alterations in the phraseology ; and added a few quotations, for the purpose of giving a more full view of the controversy to those who have had but a limited acquaintance with the public discussions of the last eight or ten years.

## LETTER I.

February 10, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Although I never had the pleasure of seeing your face, I have for some time felt acquainted with you, having heard so much respecting you from our mutual friend, Mr. Nettleton. I was therefore fully prepared to reciprocate every expression of confidence contained in your kind and friendly letter of the first inst. I can assure you that brother N. remembers with deep interest the season which he spent under your hospitable roof; and that he will ever cherish a grateful sense of the tokens of affection which he received from you and your family. And here permit me to say, that, having been intimately acquainted with him for the last five and twenty years, I can cheerfully subscribe to every word which you have said in testimony of his worth.

But I must proceed to answer your inquiries respecting "the origin and progress of Arminian views in New England." I suppose you refer to the New Haven speculations. I have had opportunity to know something of the history of these

speculations; but the story is long, and cannot be told in a single letter. If you will have patience with me, I will attempt to give you a brief history in a series of letters, promising to bring my narrative within as narrow compass as possible.

It is true, as was stated by Dr. Porter in his letter to Dr. Beecher, that "Arminianism received from the hand of Edwards its death blow, of which it lingered more than half a century in New England and died. Our orthodoxy had settled into a solid, tranquil, scriptural state; and perhaps no body of ministers since the world began have been so united, and so manifestly blessed of God, as the ministers of New England." Such was the state of things, when, as Dr. Porter says—"A battery was opened in Connecticut, a standard raised, and a campaign begun."

The first indications that the New Haven divines were beginning to adopt opinions at variance with those which commonly prevailed among the orthodox, appeared while the controversy between Dr. Woods of Andover, and Dr. Ware of Cambridge, was in progress; which was in 1820, '21. Dr. Taylor expressed to some of his brethren great dissatisfaction with the manner in which Dr. Woods had conducted the controversy, and with the views which he had advanced, particularly on the subject of Native Depravity. He was heard to say, that on that subject Dr. Ware had the better of the argument, and that Dr. Woods had put back the controversy with Unitarians fifty years. Under the impulse of these feelings, he prepared an article



for the *Christian Spectator*, which he submitted to the association of gentlemen, by whom, in connexion with the editor, the work was conducted. The Association decided that it was not expedient to publish the article. Of the character of the piece, and the sentiments which it contained, you may perhaps form some conjecture from the following circumstance. While Dr. Taylor was reading it, one of the gentlemen present composed and wrote with his pencil this stanza :

Immortal Edwards, whom religion hails  
Her favorite son, a Taylor overthrew ;  
A Taylor now the great man's ghost assails,  
His doctrine doubts, and error vamps anew.

I am not able to fix the precise date of this event. I am not certain whether it was previous or *subsequent to the fact* which I am about to relate. On Saturday evening, Dec. 15, 1821, Professor Goodrich of Yale College, in his course of lectures to the college students, came to the doctrine of Original Sin. He commenced his lecture by observing that he was about to present a different view of the subject from that which is commonly received; and proceeded to exhibit the views which were afterwards published in the *Christian Spectator*; and which I shall have occasion to notice in a future letter. Some of the pious students, who had read the controversy between Dr. Woods and Dr. Ware, thought that the views exhibited in this lecture bore a striking resemblance to those of Dr. Ware. They were grieved and alarmed. Some of them wrote to their friends, and in this way considerable uneasiness was excited. Mr. Nettleton was at this

time laboring in Litchfield with Dr. Beecher. On hearing what had transpired at New Haven, Dr. Beecher wrote to Dr. Taylor, and some correspondence ensued. Professor Goodrich sent his lecture to Litchfield. About that time Dr. Humphrey, then pastor of the church in Pittsfield, now President of Amherst College, happened to be there on a visit. He and Mr. Nettleton examined it together, and were greatly dissatisfied. Dr. Beecher did not approve of the views expressed by Professor Goodrich and Dr. Taylor; yet in his correspondence at this time, he made some concessions with which Mr. Nettleton was not satisfied; and in a letter which he (Mr. N.) wrote to Dr. Taylor, he said :

“ With all my love and respect for brothers Taylor and Goodrich and Beecher, I must say that neither my judgment, nor conscience, nor heart, can acquiesce, and I can go with you no farther. Whatever you may say about infants, for one, I do solemnly believe that God views, and treats them in all respects, just as he would do if they were sinners. To say that animals die, and therefore death can be no proof of sin in infants, is to take infidel ground. The infidel has just as good a right to say, because animals die without being sinners, therefore adults may. If death may reign to such an alarming extent over the human race, and yet be no proof of sin, then you adopt the principle that death may reign to any extent over the universe, and it can never be made a proof of sin in any case. Then what Paul says “ Death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned,” is not true. Infants die either on account of their

own sin, or the sin of Adam, or neither. Hence the most that Paul can mean is this, death by sin, if they live long enough; if not, they shall die without it. You may speculate better than I can; but I know one thing better than you do. I know better what Christians will, and what they will not receive; and I forewarn you that whenever you come out, our best Christians will revolt. I felt a deep interest in the controversy between the Orthodox and Unitarians, while it was kept out on the open field of *Total Depravity, Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, Divine Sovereignty, and Election*. For this was taking the enemy by the heart, and I knew who would conquer. But you are giving the discussion a bad turn, and I have lost all my interest in the subject, and do not wish my fellow sinners to hear it. I do fear it is a trick of the devil to send brother Taylor on a wild goose chase after what he will never find, and which if found would not be worth one straw." These are only short extracts from a long letter. The whole has not been preserved. This letter Mr. Nettleton read to Dr. Beecher.

This was in December, 1821. After this Mr. Nettleton had repeated private discussions with the brethren at New Haven, in which he expressed his dissatisfaction with their peculiar views, and faithfully expostulated with them on the danger of causing division among the ministers and churches of New England. And yet for several years it was currently reported, and extensively believed, that he agreed with the New Haven divines, and the influence of his name was made use of to give currency to their peculiar views.

How unjustly this was done, is evident from the foregoing extracts. The alarm which was occasioned among the pious students, by the lecture of Professor Goodrich, was somewhat allayed by some explanations which he made to them, and for a season the matter was in a great measure hushed. But Mr. Nettleton, and some others who were acquainted with the facts, were not without great solicitude. Meanwhile the Professorship of Didactic Theology was founded in Yale College, Dr. Taylor was appointed Professor, and the Theological School was organized in its present form in 1822. The founders of this Professorship, required the Professor to sign the following declaration: "I hereby declare my free assent to the Confession of Faith and Ecclesiastical Discipline, agreed upon by the churches of the State, in the year 1708." Dr. Taylor signed this declaration and was inducted into office. The Confession of Faith here specified is what has been denominated the Saybrook Platform, and so far as doctrines are concerned, differs scarcely at all from the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church.

In 1826, Professor Fitch preached and published his discourses on the nature of sin, in which he advanced the position that *all sin consists in the voluntary transgression of known law*. This was regarded by many as a virtual denial of original sin and native depravity as maintained by Calvinists. These discourses were reviewed by Dr. Green in the Christian Advocate. Professor Fitch replied to the Review. Meanwhile young men began to issue from the New Haven school, and to proclaim the discov-

eries of their teacher. In this way very considerable alarm was created in some quarters. Still those who were dissatisfied dreaded an explosion which should hazard the peace of the churches, and refrained from publishing their views; and all hope of avoiding a public controversy was not given up till Dr. Taylor published his *Concio ad Clerum*. Some account of this, and the controversy which it occasioned, I will give you in my next letter.

Yours very affectionately.

## LETTER II.

February 13, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Dr. Taylor's "Concio ad Clerum" was preached in the Chapel of Yale College on the evening of Commencement, Sept. 10, 1828. It was soon after published. This was the commencement of the public controversy in New England. The object of the sermon was, to exhibit and establish the author's views of the doctrine of native depravity ; it was apparent from the whole strain of the sermon, that the preacher was conscious that the views which he was exhibiting were different from those which were commonly received. He attempted to demolish what he called "*very common*, but groundless assumptions—assumptions which, so long as they are admitted and reasoned upon, must leave the subject involved in insuperable difficulties." In one of his notes, after stating the different forms of the doctrine of depravity, which he supposed to be held by the orthodox, placing that form of it which he adopted *last*, he says, "Those who reject the last form of it, and adopt either of the preceding forms, will,



it is hoped, favor the world with some better arguments on the subject than have hitherto been furnished." This was throwing down the gauntlet and challenging a controversy. But I must give you some account of the sermon.

The text was Eph. ii. 3: *And were by nature children of wrath even as others.* The doctrine of the text, he stated to be, "that the entire moral depravity of man is by nature." The statement of this doctrine seemed to give promise that he was about to exhibit the common views on this subject. But in his explanations of the nature of depravity, and of the sense in which it is by nature, he was understood to advance principles utterly inconsistent with his main proposition—principles which lead to the conclusion that there is in man no natural hereditary propensity to sin, and that there was no real connexion between the sin of Adam and that of his posterity. Moral depravity he defines to be, "a man's own act, consisting of a free choice of some object rather than God, as his chief good; or a free preference of the world and worldly good, to the will and glory of God." By mankind being depraved by nature, he says, "I do not mean that their nature is itself sinful, nor that their nature is the physical or efficient cause of their sinning; but I mean that their nature is the occasion or reason of their sinning; that such is their nature, that in all the appropriate circumstances of their being, they will sin, and only sin." But he elsewhere maintains, that all men come into the world with the same nature in kind as that with which Adam was created, and which the *Child Jesus* possessed.

If this be true, it is certainly difficult to see how their nature can be in any sense the cause or reason of their sinning; or how there can be any hereditary corruption of nature, or any real connexion between the sin of Adam and that of his posterity. Towards the close of the sermon, in reply to the inquiry, why God permitted man to sin, he says, "Do you know that God could have done better, better on the whole, or better, if he gave him existence at all, even for the individual himself! The error lies in the gratuitous assumption, that God could have adopted a moral system, and prevented all sin, or at least, the present degree of sin."

This subject he resumes in a note, and proceeds at some length, to show that the reason why God does not prevent all sin in the moral universe and make all his rational creatures holy and happy, is, that it is not possible for him to do it. He says, "If holiness in a moral system be preferable on the whole to sin in its stead, why did not a benevolent God, were it possible to him, prevent all sin, and secure the prevalence of universal holiness? Would not a moral universe of perfect holiness, be happier and better than one comprising sin and its miseries? And must not infinite benevolence accomplish all the good it can? Would not a benevolent God then, *had it been possible to him in the nature of things*, have secured the existence of universal holiness in his moral kingdom?" Again he says, "Who does most reverence to God, he who supposes that God *would* have prevented all sin in his moral universe, but *could* not; or he who affirms that he *could* have prevented it, but *would* not?"



This note gave great dissatisfaction, and was extensively regarded as a virtual denial of the Omnipotence, and universal Providence of God, and as being utterly subversive of the Calvinistic doctrine of the divine decrees. It called forth, as I shall have occasion to mention hereafter, the letters of Dr. Woods to Dr. Taylor, which were published in 1839. This sermon was reviewed by the Rev. Dr. Harvey. The reviewer points out what he conceives to be the peculiarities of sentiment contained in the sermon, and attempts to show that they are inconsistent both with the Bible, and with the writings of the standard orthodox New England divines. To this review a reply was published in the *Christian Spectator*, ascribed, at first, to the Rev. Dr. Porter, of Farmington, but ascertained afterwards to have been written principally by Professor Goodrich. It comprised the substance of his lecture to the College Students, in 1821, of which some notice was taken in my last letter.

In this reply the following principles are clearly maintained, viz: That infants possess no moral character—that they sustain precisely the same relation to the moral government of God, as brute animals—that suffering and death are no more proof of sin in them than in brutes—that salvation by Christ in their case denotes deliverance from the future existence of sin and its consequences, and that it is proper to baptize them, not because they need sanctification, but because they will need it, if they live to become moral agents. The fact that all men become sinners is accounted for in the following manner: “A child enters the world with a variety of appetites

and desires, which are generally acknowledged to be neither sinful nor holy. Committed in a state of utter helplessness to the assiduity of parental fondness, it commences existence, the object of unceasing care, watchfulness, and concession to those around it. Under such circumstances it is, that the natural appetites are first developed, and each advancing month brings new objects of gratification. The obvious consequence is, that self-indulgence becomes the master principle in the soul of every child, long before it can understand that this self-indulgence will interfere with the rights, or intrench on the happiness of others. Thus by repetition is the force of constitutional propensities accumulating a bias towards self-gratification, which becomes incredibly strong, before a knowledge of duty or a sense of right and wrong, can possibly have entered the mind. That moment, the commencement of moral agency at length arrives."

Thus the universal sinfulness of mankind is accounted for, not from any corruption of nature derived from Adam, but from the circumstances in which mankind are placed in early infancy. An able answer to this article was published, supposed to have been written by Dr. Harvey, to which Dr. Taylor made a short reply. The controversy thus far, was confined principally to the doctrine of native depravity, although the note in Dr. Taylor's sermon respecting God's ability to prevent sin, was not passed over without due animadversion.

You will be interested to know what were the views of your friend Mr. Nettleton, at this stage of the controversy. The following extract of a

letter written by him to Dr. Beecher at this period, will give you some information. The letter is dated at Enfield, Mass, Sept. 18, 1829.

“ While at Amherst, I read through Dr. Taylor of Norwich, and much of Edwards in reply. And I must say, that so far as I understand the subject, the sentiments of our New Haven brethren, are more in accordance with the former, than with the latter. And so far as the interpretation of the Bible is concerned, brother Taylor’s students, some of them at least, (whether they are conscious of it or not, I cannot say,) in every important particular, are fully with Dr. Taylor of Norwich, and at war with Edwards. The Reviewer of Taylor and Harvey does not give us the meaning of the texts which seem to cross his path ; but he has adopted principles which are at war with all that Edwards has written on *original sin*, and the *nature of regeneration*. If the sentiments contained in that Review be correct, then Edwards was wrong in his interpretation of every text in his piece on *original sin*. Brother Taylor has not come to the most important part of his work—to give us the meaning of the Bible. After abandoning imputation, and what he calls physical depravity, we shall be compelled to adopt the sentiments of Dr. Taylor of Norwich, and genuine Arminianism, or *actual sin* from the commencement of the soul, or deny that infants need redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit ; or if they do need redemption, it must be a redemption from something which is not sinful in any sense, and if they need regeneration, it must be a change of something which is not

sinful in any sense. If the soul be innocent, it can be redeemed from nothing, and can never join the song of the redeemed, "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." If the soul be innocent, it can be regenerated, only for the worse. Then, if you doubt, as some are beginning to do, whether the soul commences at birth, would it not be idle to reason about the *nature* of that which has no existence. To admit the necessity of redemption by the blood of Christ, and of regeneration by the supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit, of something of whose nature we know nothing, and of whose existence we doubt, is bad philosophy as well as bad theology. I say these things to show that brother Taylor cannot stand where he is. His students, some of them at least, do not take the ground assumed in his printed sermon, that infants need redemption and regeneration. When interrogated by ecclesiastical bodies, "Have infants souls?" the answer sometimes is, "I do not know." "Do they need redemption?" "I do not know." "Is it proper to pray for them?" "I do not know." "What is the meaning of such and such texts?" "I do not know." Now I do not wonder that ministers are alarmed at the New Haven Theology. Interrogatories like those above will always be put to his students, when examined by ecclesiastical bodies. And since the alarm occasioned by the recent publications, I anticipate that ministers will be better prepared, more critical and sensitive than ever, on all these points. And if Dr. Taylor cannot furnish his pupils with plain answers, and answers, too, that shall comport

with his printed sermon, I think they will be in a worse predicament than ever.

“I have just received the last number of the Christian Spectator, and Harvey’s and Taylor’s pamphlets, issued on commencement day. I have read them through, but have not time or room to give my thoughts on paper. Harvey has adopted nearly my views, and Taylor in some places admits, and then again rejects them. Now “he admits that infants are sinners from their birth,” p. 30; and this is in perfect accordance with his admission that they have souls—“need redemption by Christ”—“regeneration by the Holy Spirit.” And now why hesitate to admit that death in their case is “by sin?” But this he will not admit, but tries to evade it, and to prove their innocence refers to Deut. i. 39: “Moreover, your little ones which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had *no knowledge between good and evil*, they shall go in thither.” These “little ones and children” were all from twenty years old and under. See Num. xxxii. 11. They were not summoned to the field of battle, to go *up* and take possession of Canaan, and hence it is said, they “had no knowledge between good and evil,” *quoad hoc*. If that proves any thing to brother Taylor’s purpose, it proves that all mankind under twenty years of age, are not moral agents, and are, of course, innocent. He quotes, also, and so does Professor Stuart, Jonah, iv. 11. I have formerly heard these same texts quoted for the same purpose by Methodists, and other Arminians, and I feel disposed to give the old answer. 1. It wants proof that they were infants. 2. “Cannot dis-

cern between their right hand and their left" is a proverbial expression, denoting great ignorance in adults, and is no where applied to infants. 3. It is incredible that Ninevah should contain 120,000 infants. 4. It would better accord with the book of Jonah, and with our Lord's account of their ignorance, to admit that the 120,000 embraced the entire population who repented at the preaching of Jonah, and that the city was spared on account of their repentance, and not for the sake of infants, thus making void their repentance."

We have now arrived at a period in the history of the New Haven speculations when the dissatisfaction became quite extensive. Several events occurred in the course of this year, which it will be important to notice, and of which I will give you some account in my next letter.

Yours, very affectionately.



### LETTER III.

February 17, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

In the year 1829, while the controversy mentioned in my last letter was going on, a series of articles was published in the *Christian Spectator*, on the *Means of Regeneration*, purporting to be a Review of Dr. Spring's dissertation on that subject. In these articles, which were written by Dr. Taylor, the writer maintains, that antecedent to regeneration, the selfish principle is suspended in the sinner's heart, and that then, prompted by self-love, he uses the means of regeneration with motives that are neither sinful nor holy. The manner in which the subject is discussed, seemed to many, to be utterly inconsistent with the views commonly entertained by the orthodox on this fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. Mr. Nettleton, in his letter to Dr. Beecher, an extract from which was inserted in my last letter, says in reference to this subject:

“As to Dr. Taylor's last piece on the means of regeneration, it seems to me that he has turned the thing bottom upwards. In his description of the means of regeneration, he includes the exercises or evidences of a new heart. The

carnal mind, which is enmity against God, suspends all its enmity, and selfishness, and sin, and then goes to work on the principle of self-love. How long the sinner continues in this state of neutrality he does not inform us. But no matter; the sinner does not use the means of a new heart until the old heart is gone, and he is in a state favorably disposed, like the prodigal son after he came to himself. No sinner ever did what brother Taylor considers as using the means of regeneration, until God had first regenerated him. The distinction between supreme selfishness and self-love, in the impenitent, exists only in theory, never in matter of fact. Suppose a sinner should go to brother Taylor and address him as follows: 'I have always been dissatisfied with the old doctrine of the entire sinfulness of the doings of the unregenerate, and therefore have done nothing to make a new heart; but when I saw your views I was pleased; I found that I was right, that sin could never be the means of holiness, but that the exercise of self-love might be. Accordingly, I have suspended all my selfishness, and have not committed a single sin for some time past, and have been to work on your plan, from a desire for happiness, or a principle of self-love. Thus I have made me a new heart.' How would Dr. Taylor be pleased with such an account. To me it sounds like the talk of a Pharisee. No sinner ever suspended his selfishness, until subdued by divine grace. The carnal mind, the enmity against God, the heart of stone, remains, until slain, subdued, or taken away, by the Holy Spirit."

This letter was written Sept. 18, 1829. Three



numbers of the treatise on the means of regeneration had then been published. A fourth number appeared in December, designed to obviate objections, containing some statements which, in the view of many, were utterly inconsistent with what had been published in the previous numbers. Dr. Porter, of Andover, speaking of this in a letter to a friend, says :

“ Dr. Taylor’s closing number on means, was a designed modification of the former ones, partly at the suggestion of Dr. Beecher. The latter told him that he had employed terms badly in speaking of the ‘suspension of selfishness.’ All that Dr. Taylor means, said he to me, is that ‘the carnal mind is held in check, or does not *act*, and not that it is extinct.’ ‘While this carnal mind is thus checked, has it moral qualities?’ said I. ‘Doubtless,’ he replied. ‘Is it sinful, or holy, or neither?’ (Pause.) ‘The man is doubtless a sinner,’ said he. ‘Can one who pugnaciously and ostentatiously maintains that all sin consists in *action*, maintain too that a carnal mind is sinful when its action has ceased?’ (No reply.) ”

These articles on the means of regeneration, created serious alarm in the minds of many ministers, and were the foundation of the controversy between Dr. Taylor and Dr. Tyler, which commenced near the close of the year 1829. But before I proceed to give an account of this controversy, I will mention some events which occurred previously in the course of this year. In May, 1829, Dr. Porter wrote his letter to Dr. Beecher, which has been recently published, and which you have seen. The deep

solicitude expressed in that letter, in view of the new theological speculations which were coming up in New England, was not confined to him, but existed in the minds of many of his brethren. In October, of the same year, he thus wrote to a friend :

“ From some remarks which were dropped when you and brother Humphrey were in my study, I have supposed that both you and he have much the same views of Dr. Taylor’s speculative theory that I have. That he was very much dissatisfied last May, I know from his strong declarations ; and his disquietude, I presume, cannot have been diminished by the subsequent character of the *Christian Spectator*. Since that time too, I have known that such men as the Princeton Professors, Dr. Spring, Dr. Porter of Catskill, Dr. Hyde of Lee, Dr. Richards of Auburn, Dr. Griffin, &c., are seriously dissatisfied. Without time to enter into particulars, my difficulty is, that his note to his sermon, *the Concio ad Clerum*, his views of native depravity, of means and regeneration, are virtually Arminian ; at least, they will be so understood as to bring up a race of young preachers thoroughly anti-Calvinistic. The spirit besides, is like the he-goat of Daniel, bold and pushing—impatient of inquiry, or hesitation in other men. Now, what is to be done ? Shall we sustain our Calvinism, or see it run down to the standard of Methodists, and laxer men ? It is time that a note ‘ of remonstrance be struck up somewhere.’ ”

It has been currently reported in some quarters, that all the dissatisfaction with the New Haven Theology, has been produced by secret

whisperings, and rumors set afloat by one or two individuals who were personal enemies to Dr. Taylor. No representation could be more untrue. Who were the men that in 1829 were seriously dissatisfied? Dr. Porter has mentioned the names of a few. Many others of similar character might be added to the list. And were these men personal enemies to Dr. Taylor? Or did they form their opinions of his theology from floating rumors? No, their dissatisfaction was the result of a candid and careful perusal of his writings, and those of his associates.

In September of this year, a little previous to the date of the letter from which the above extract is taken, (at the time of the anniversary at Andover,) a Conference was held at the house of Dr. Porter, between the New Haven Divines and several other ministers of distinction, with a view, if possible, of coming to a friendly understanding, and of preventing the necessity of any further public controversy. It was fondly hoped that explanations might be given, and concessions made which would relieve the minds of those who were dissatisfied. At this meeting were present, Dr. Taylor and Professor Goodrich from New Haven, Dr. Beecher, the Andover Professors, Dr. Church, Dr. Spring, Dr. Cogswell, Mr. Nettleton, Dr. Hewit, and some others whose names I am not now able to specify. The result of this interview was not as happy as some had anticipated. The explanations of the New Haven brethren so far from removing the dissatisfaction which existed, served rather to increase it. That the mind of Dr. Porter was not at all relieved, is evident from the letter from which

the above extract is taken, and which was written only a few days after the interview. It is known that others who were present felt as he did. They were fully convinced that a public controversy could not be avoided. As much as they dreaded the evil connected with such a controversy, it was their solemn conviction that they were called upon by the great head of the Church to take an open and decided stand against these speculations, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Dr. Woods at this time came to the determination to publish his letters to Dr. Taylor.

Shortly after this interview, Mr. Nettleton, being at Andover, dropped a line to Dr. Beecher, requesting him to invite the orthodox ministers of Boston to meet at his house, at a given time, as he wished very much to see them. At the time appointed he was there. He stated to his brethren that he was about to leave New England for the South, and that as reports were in circulation that he accorded in sentiment with the New Haven divines, and the influence of his name was thus made use of to give currency to their peculiar views; he wished them distinctly to understand that he did not adopt those views and never had adopted them; and that he should feel it to be his duty on all suitable occasions, to bear his testimony against them. He said that such were his convictions of the tendency of those views to corrupt revivals and produce spurious conversions, that if all New England should go over, he should prefer to stand alone, and he requested his brethren to make known his views as they had opportunity, that his name

might not be made use of to sanction sentiments which he did not, and could not receive. Mr. Evarts, and Dr. Cornelius were at this meeting, and entered fully into the views of Mr. Nettleton. What course Dr. Beecher pursued at this time, and at some other times, I may perhaps have occasion to mention in a future letter.

I have mentioned that the controversy between Dr. Taylor and Dr. Tyler commenced the latter part of this year. Dr. Tyler was at this time pastor of a Church in Portland, (Me.) He was a native of Connecticut, and spent the first part of his pastoral life in that State, during which time Dr. Taylor was one of his intimate friends. He had been absent from the State about nine years, and although he had heard of the dissatisfaction which existed in Connecticut and elsewhere, in regard to Dr. Taylor's Theological views, he was inclined to believe that it was in a great measure groundless. In the summer of 1829, he visited Connecticut and collected all the pamphlets which had been published in relation to this controversy. On his return to Portland, he sat down to a careful examination of what had been published. The result was a full conviction that the New Haven brethren had adopted opinions which were erroneons and of dangerous tendency. The state of his mind at this time will be seen from the following extract of a letter to a friend, dated Oct. 8, 1829:

“Will you believe it, when your letter arrived, I was poring over the New Haven Divinity, as I have been for several days past. I should like to read to you some remarks which I have written on brother Taylor's Review of Dr. Spring. That Review has opened my eyes. Unless I am great-

ly mistaken, there is much error in that Review ; and the error regards principles of the first importance. When I was in Connecticut, I had not thought much on the controverted points, and I was disposed to regard them, as of but little practical importance. But since I returned home I have carefully read what has been published, and have come to the very conclusion which you have expressed in your letter that 'there is a radical departure from our views of the great doctrines of the Bible.' These brethren cannot stand where they are. They are attempting to strike out a middle course between Calvinism and Arminianism, but they must go over to the one side or the other. Now what shall be done? What was the result of the consultation at Andover? Is the thing to be hushed, or is there to be a public discussion? I have been exceedingly distressed for a few weeks past in reflecting on this subject. What is to become of New England? Must we fight over the battles of former generations? And that too with brethren in whom we have had the highest confidence, and with whom we have long acted in concert."

About this time Dr. Tyler wrote to Dr. Taylor, and expressed with great frankness all his fears. Several letters passed between them ; but the explanations of Dr. Taylor so far from relieving his mind, increased his dissatisfaction ; and he finally consented at the earnest solicitation of several of his brethren, to publish his strictures on Dr. Taylor's treatise on the means of regeneration. Some account of this controversy, I will give you in my next letter.

Yours very affectionately.



## LETTER IV.

February 21, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Dr. Tyler published his *Strictures*, Dec. 1829. He says in his Preface :

“ The writer of the following *Strictures* is conscious of no unfriendly feelings towards the conductors of the *Christian Spectator* ; and especially towards the individual who is generally known to be the writer of the *Review*. He has ever regarded him with the highest respect, and cherished towards him the warmest sentiments of personal friendship. Until recently, he has had the fullest confidence in the general correctness of his theological views. But recent publications, and particularly the articles noticed in the following sheets, have produced the conviction, that in some things he has swerved from the faith of our Pilgrim fathers. Not that he has formally denied any one doctrine of the orthodox system, but, it is believed, that in his statements and explanations, he has adopted principles, which will lead, by inevitable consequence, to the denial of important doctrines, and that his speculations will

pave the way for the gradual influx of error upon the American Churches, disastrous to the interests of evangelical religion. Nothing but the fullest conviction of the dangerous tendency of these speculations, and the necessity of some counteracting influence, could have induced the writer to appear, in this manner, before the public. But personal considerations are to be waved, when the interests of truth and piety are concerned."

In prosecuting his object, he in the first place, attempts to correct some errors in regard to the meaning and explanation of terms. He objects to the meaning which Dr. Taylor attaches to the term *regeneration*. He uses it to denote "that act of the will or heart which consists in preference of God to every other object; making it of course, an act of the sinner, and not exclusively the work of God. He objects also to the distinction which Dr. Taylor makes between the popular and theological use of the term *regeneration*. In the popular sense, Dr. Taylor supposes it to denote a process, or series of acts and states of mind, and to include all those acts which constitute, using the means of regeneration. He objects also to the sense in which Dr. Taylor uses the term selfishness. According to him, selfishness consists not in a supreme regard to our own happiness, but in the love of the world, or in preferring the world to God, as our portion or chief good. He makes a distinction between selfishness and self-love, and supposes that the former may be suspended in the unrenewed heart, and that the sinner influenced by the latter, may use the means of regeneration with mo-



tives which are neither sinful nor holy. An ultimate regard to our own happiness, according to him, is not selfishness, but self-love, a principle by which all moral beings of whatever character, are actuated. He says, indeed, "Of all specific voluntary action, the happiness of the agent, in some form, is the ultimate end;" thus confounding as Dr. Tyler shows, all distinction between holiness, and sin, making both proceed from the same principle of action.

In regard to the suspension of the selfish principle, Dr. Tyler asks, "But how is the selfish principle suspended? Is it suspended by the interposition of God, or by an act of the sinner? Not by the interposition of God, for, if I understand the Reviewer, he supposes that those mental acts which constitute using the means of regeneration, precede the act of divine interposition. Besides, if God by an act of his grace, suspends the selfish principle, what is this but regeneration? Does the sinner while under the control of supreme selfishness, and consequently from a selfish motive resolve not to be selfish. This would seem to represent selfishness as divided against itself, 'an absurdity sufficiently palpable to silence even Jewish cavilling.' Is the selfish principle suspended without any act of the mind? What is the cause of this wonderful phenomenon? Or has it no cause? Is it an accident which may, or may not happen, and which, nevertheless must happen in regard to every one of the human race before he can be regenerated?"

He elsewhere shows that there is not, and

cannot be, any such thing as the suspension of the selfish principle in the unregenerated heart.

"It is admitted," he says, "that there is no holiness in man antecedent to regeneration. Consequently, there is no love to God, and no true benevolence. By what principle then, is the sinner actuated? By self-love, it is said. But is it possible that the sinner while destitute of love to God, and of every spark of genuine benevolence, should love himself at all and not love himself supremely? What other object does he regard more than self? Not God, nor the happiness of the universe. What other object does he regard at all? Nothing, except as it tends to promote his ultimate end, viz. his own happiness. This is his sole object of pursuit. This fills all his eye, and engrosses all his thoughts and all his purposes. To this he is supremely devoted. Consequently he is supremely selfish. It is impossible to conceive of a being more so. Every moral being destitute of benevolence, and actuated by self-love, is necessarily a selfish being. According to this supposition, self-love is the governing principle of his mind, and if this does not constitute selfishness, it is impossible to conceive of any thing which can constitute it. To suppose therefore, selfishness to be suspended in the natural heart, and self-love to exist and operate, is to suppose an absolute impossibility. If one is suspended, the other must be also."

After exhibiting fully Dr. Taylor's theory, Dr. Tyler proposes seven queries, which are intended to present in a single view its legitimate consequences. His first query is, "Whether according to Dr. Taylor's representations, regeneration

is not a gradual and progressive work?" The second, "Whether the theory in question does not involve the inconsistency of supposing that the heart is changed antecedent to regeneration?" The third, "What becomes of the sinner's conviction of sin, while using the means of regeneration?" The fourth, "Whether the theory in question, does not dispense with the necessity of divine influence in regeneration?" The fifth, "Whether Dr. Taylor does not represent the sinner as laboring under a natural inability to do his duty?" The sixth, "Whether he does not, in effect, deny the doctrine of sovereign and distinguishing grace?" The seventh, "Whether this theory, if drawn out in detail, and inculcated by the teachers of religion, has not a direct tendency to stifle conviction of sin, and produce spurious conversions?"

The strictures were reviewed in the *Christian Spectator*, by Dr. Taylor. Dr. Tyler published a vindication of the strictures. There was a very brief notice of the vindication in the *Spectator*, with an intimation that it might be followed by a more extended review. But that review has never appeared.

To give you an idea of the impression made upon some minds by this discussion, I quote the following extract from a letter of Dr. Porter, dated Charleston (S. C.) May 1, 1830.

"A letter from brother Stuart, soon after I left you, had this passage. 'Dr. Tyler has published his pamphlet which has made an end of the matter as to brother Taylor's regeneration by self-love—a full end. There is no redemption. All the fog is blown away, and we have at

last, a clear and sheer regeneration of the natural man by himself, stimulated by self-love; made out to be the scheme of brother Taylor. 'There is no getting aside of it.' I quote this because it accords so perfectly with my own views, and because brother Stuart has been claimed by Dr. Taylor, as on his side.

"I take it for granted that Professor Stuart can have no objections that the above extract be seen, because it perfectly accords with what he has expressed in conversation to many individuals, and because I presume he is willing that his views should be known; especially since the influence of his name has been so extensively employed to give sanction to sentiments, which he not only does not believe, but rejects with abhorrence."

In the same letter from which the above is extracted, Dr. Porter thus speaks of the reply to Dr. Tyler's strictures, "On returning to this city, I find in the Spectator for March, Dr. Taylor's review of Dr. Tyler's strictures, and though I can hardly say I am disappointed, I am troubled in spirit at the character of this review. I am sorry to see a temper in some respects so exceptionable! Indeed, I am completely nonplussed to see what Dr. Taylor would be at. He began writing avowedly to correct what he thought common errors of our theologians: and next he supports his own views by quoting these theologians as concurring in sentiment with himself. If Dr. Taylor is radically wrong, it is a great evil. If he is right, and yet uses language, so as to lead others wrong in their own system, or wrong in their views of his, it is still a great evil. What can be done with a man who will turn upon you

at every corner, with 'you mistake my meaning?' I answer, let him be candidly, kindly, and solemnly pressed farther. His views of self-love cannot stand inquiry. His true benevolence—love to God—in its most elementary form, is what? Regard to one's own happiness. Fuller in his 'Gospel its own witness,' shows this to be an infidel sentiment; and Smalley shows that satan is innocent, if an ultimate regard to self, is no sin."

In his published letters on Revivals of Religion, Dr. Porter has some excellent remarks on this subject. I have room only for a short extract. After quoting two or three passages from Dr. Taylor's Treatise on the means of regeneration he says, "This language certainly is not so precise as one could wish, but it seems unavoidable to understand it as meaning, that regard to his own happiness is the primary and proper spring of action in every man; that his moral character is determined solely by the object of his choice, or his estimate of his own interests as correct or incorrect; that if he chooses the world as his chief good, from self-love, he is an unholy man; but if he chooses God from self-love, he is a regenerate man. And by that voluntary act, in which he first prefers God to the world, from regard to his own interest, he becomes regenerate. Any man may use language so as not to express his own meaning. But deliberately to admit that self-love must be the primary ground of moral affection, is to supersede all intelligent discussion, about *regeneration*, or any of the kindred doctrines of grace. This one principle sweeps the whole away. There

remains no radical distinction of character between the saint and the sinner. The most depraved individual on earth, or even among apostate spirits, doubtless is the centre of his affections. And though he may have perverted views of his own interest, he means notwithstanding to act, and does act, from a primary regard to himself. And if this is the highest principle of action to a holy being, then an angel and a devil stand on the same ground as to moral character; (in other words) there is no distinction between holiness and sin. Besides, this theory would split the moral system into as many jarring parts with as many centres of 'primary' affections as it contains individuals. It would set every moral agent at variance with every other moral agent, and with God himself. Whereas the simple precept, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart'—sets up another standard in every bosom. It establishes a common centre of moral affection to the universe of moral agents, and binds the hearts of all to each other, and to the throne of Jehovah."

I have made free use of the thoughts of Dr. Porter, because he was extensively known and highly esteemed at the South; and because, in his theological views, he may be regarded as a fair representative of a large portion of the ministers of New England. I propose in my next letter, to give you some account of the controversy between Dr. Woods and Dr. Taylor.

Yours very affectionately.



## LETTER V.

February, 23, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Dr. Woods published his letters to Dr. Taylor in 1830. These letters were occasioned by the note to Dr. Taylor's *Concio ad Clerum*, in which he attempts to account for the existence of sin, by supposing that its prevention in a moral system is impossible to God.

In his first letter, he makes some remarks on the proper manner of conducting theological discussion, the duty and responsibility of Theological Professors, the danger of giving too much prominence to philosophical speculations in matters of religion, and the importance of conforming exactly to the word of God. In the second letter he attempts to ascertain the precise meaning of Dr. Taylor's language. He understands him to maintain these two positions, "First: *That sin is not the necessary means of the greatest good, and as such, so far as it exists, is not on the whole, preferable to holiness in its stead.* Second, *That in a moral system, God could not prevent all sin, nor the present degree of it.*" In



the third letter, he considers the question whether there is any thing in the nature of moral agency which renders it impossible for God to prevent sin, and shows that Dr. Taylor's theory implies the independence of moral agents. On this point he says :

“ You hold that such is the nature of moral agency, that it was utterly impossible for God to prevent its perversion ; that if moral beings existed, it was unavoidable that some of them should sin ; and that Omnipotence itself could not exert an influence upon them sufficient to prevent this. Let God create moral beings any way he pleases ; let him place them in the most favorable circumstances, exert upon them the highest possible influence, and extend over them the most constant and most powerful protection ; let him watch them with his Omniscient eye, and shield them with his Omnipotent arm ; still, according to your theory, they will, at least some of them, fall into sin. You think there is in moral agency itself, a power so resistless, that it is impossible for God himself, however strong may be his desire, to prevent the existence, or even the present degree of sin.”

In the fourth letter, he shows that God has a perfect control over the minds of all rational creatures, without in the least degree impairing their moral freedom. He also refutes the assertion of Dr. Taylor, that the common theory limits the goodness of God. In the fifth letter, he continues his examination of Dr. Taylor's reasoning from the nature of moral agency, and shows that to prevent the perversion of moral agency, is not necessarily to destroy it. In this

letter he adduces direct proof that God is able to convert more sinners than are converted. 1. From his Omnipotence. 2. From what he has done. 3. From the requisition of prayer. 4. From the representation of scripture, that God converts men according to *his will or pleasure*.

In the sixth letter, he considers the question whether God could have secured the holiness of any moral being without the influence of moral evil. He also attempts to ascertain the meaning of the position that *sin is the necessary means of the greatest good*, and in what sense it is true. Not that sin is good in its own nature and tendency, but that it is so overruled and counteracted as to be made to subserve a benevolent end. In the seventh letter, he answers the objection of Dr. Taylor, that if sin is, on the whole, for the best, it is our duty to sin, and God cannot be sincere in forbidding it. He repels the insinuation that the orthodox consider sin as "excellent in its nature and relations." On this point he says:

"Now Dear Brother, who holds the opinion which you here oppose and contrast with your own? Who among all the ministers and friends of Christ, especially among the orthodox ministers and christians in this country, ever entertained an opinion so impious and shocking as that God considered sin as '*excellent in its nature and relations*,' or purposed it *as such*. Such a sentiment, I am bold to say, can be found in no orthodox writer, and must be instantly repelled by every pious heart. Why then, I ask, do you use language which certainly implies, that this opinion is held by those from whom you differ?

If you mean to convey this impression, then I am constrained to say, that no calumniator of the orthodox ever charged them more injuriously."

In the eighth and last letter, he considers the practical influence of Dr. Taylor's theory, as it affects our views of the power of God—the blessedness of God—the system of his works—the extent of his dominion—the happiness of the good—submission—prayer—and dependence on divine grace. He then closes with a friendly expostulation with Dr. Taylor, in regard to his speculations generally. I should be glad to quote largely from this letter, but I have room only for a few brief extracts.

He says, "'The unqualified language which you sometimes employ respecting the natural state, the free will and powers of man, the nature and necessity of divine influence, the manner of regeneration, and other points alluded to, is not I apprehend, in accordance either with the letter or the spirit of Revelation, and will have an unpropitious influence upon the characters of men, upon revivals of religion, and upon the interests of the church. But on these subjects I would not enlarge at present, as I have intended to give my views respecting them more fully in another way. But, my brother, you cannot surely think it strange, that serious disquietude and alarm should exist among us, in consequence of what you have published in relation to these subjects. For you well know that Calvinists, though not afraid of free discussion, are sincerely and firmly attached to their articles of faith, and are not apt to be carried about with the changing

opinions of others. Whether right or wrong, we have been accustomed to consider the controversy which early arose in the Church between the Orthodox and Pelagians, and which after the Reformation, was continued between the Lutherans and Calvinists on one side, and the Arminians or Remonstrants on the other, as of radical importance.

“Now how would you expect us to feel, and with our convictions, how ought we to feel, when a brother who has professed to be decidedly orthodox, and has had our entire confidence, and is placed at the head of one of our theological schools, makes an attack upon several of the articles of our faith, and employs language on the subject of moral agency, free will, depravity, divine influence, &c., which is so like the language of Arminians and Pelagians, that it would require some labor to discover the difference? And how would it be natural for us to feel, when such a brother adopts, on several controverted subjects, the language and the opinions which have been adopted by the Unitarians; and when we find that Unitarians themselves understand him as arguing with them, and making such argument a subject of exultation? Would it not betray an indifference and remissness in us, which you would think unaccountable, if such things excited no solicitude in us respecting the cause which ought ever to be dearest to our hearts?”

“I have not adverted to this noticeable agreement in phraseology, and in reasoning between you and those I have mentioned, for the purpose of stigmatizing your theory, or as proof that it is erroneous.”

“ But when we find you, on several interesting points, siding with these sects against the orthodox, siding too with Dr. John Taylor against Edwards, on some of the main questions at issue between them, and when, in addition to this, we find you on some points coinciding so nearly with the views of the French Philosophers, and shall I say, on other points, throwing out the very objections which we have so often heard from cavillers against orthodoxy, it would certainly be strange, if none of our sensibilities were touched, and no concern or fear excited within us in regard to the tendency of your speculations. I acknowledge that on this subject, we may be mistaken, and that our fear may be groundless. And we will be anxiously looking for evidence to satisfy us that it is so. To such evidence, we will open every avenue to our understandings and our hearts.

“ But I feel myself constrained to say, that the theory which you adopt, in contradistinction to the common theory, appears to me, generally, so far as I understand it, to be unscriptural, and of dangerous tendency. And the more I examine it, the farther I am from being satisfied with it. And this is the case with the orthodox community to an extent, as I have reason to think, far beyond your apprehension. Compared with the whole body of Congregational and Presbyterian ministers, there are very few who embrace your opinions; and though my knowledge may be defective, yet among all the Professors of our Theological Seminaries and Presidents of our Colleges, I do not know of one, whose views coincide with yours.

“But although such has been the case with me and my brethren in the same office generally, we have been slow, perhaps too slow, to make a public declaration of our dissent. So far have we been from acting the part of *assailants*, that we have been very reluctant to come even to the work of *self-defence*.” “In the mean time, you and your associates have been intent upon your object, and by preaching and conversation, and pamphlets, especially by a popular periodical, have been zealously laboring to propagate your tenets. At length, in conformity with the wishes of many, far and near, I have been induced to unite with those respected ministers who have preceded me, not, be it remembered, in making an attack on you, as has been very incautiously said, but in repelling your attack upon us and our brethren, and in defending our common and long established faith against what we conceive to be innovation and error.

“I most heartily regret the introduction of a controversy, which may turn off the minds of many from the great interests of religion, fill our Churches with strife, and hinder the spread of the Gospel. But for the evils of such a controversy, who is responsible?” “If after all the efforts I have made, I have misapprehended the true sense of the passages in your sermon, to which I have attended, I shall hope for such explanations from you, as will effectually correct my mistake. And you will keep in mind, that the mistake, if there is one, exists among your readers extensively. Do you not owe it then to the public, to give a clear, unambiguous, and full exhibition of the peculiarities of your system,



so that there may no longer be any complaint of obscurity, or any suspicion of concealment."

"If it be true that your system agrees with that of Edwards and Dwight and New England ministers generally, the public should be satisfied of this. Or if a new system is to be introduced, and a new sect formed, with a new name, and new measures to extend itself, and a new and separate interest; then the public ought to have the means of understanding exactly what the new system is, and what is to be the new sect. The difficulty lies not at all between you and me, personally, but between you, and the Christian community. And if you will in any way satisfy them that you do not entertain the views which have been imputed to you; if you will satisfy them, that you agree in your doctrinal belief, as you profess to do, with Edwards and Dwight; I and others shall have nothing more to do, but to signify our joy, that our mistake has been corrected, and our entire confidence in you restored; and so the whole matter may come at once to a happy termination."

These letters were read with deep interest by the ministers of New England; and were extensively regarded as a complete refutation of the theory of Dr. Taylor. They were also admired for the candor and Christian spirit by which they were signally characterised. Such, however, was not the judgment passed upon them by the New Haven divines. In their review of them in the *Christian Spectator*, they speak of them as being filled with evasions and misrepresentations, and as being pervaded by a "personal incivility," which is "without a parallel in our Churches for



the last thirty years." It may be interesting to know the opinion of an impartial critic on the other side of the Atlantic. Dr. John Pye Smith, in the *London Eclectic Review*, after speaking in high commendation of the reasoning of Dr. Woods, in these letters, adds, "The soundness of Dr. Woods' argument, so far as it is opposed to the theory of Dr. Taylor, is not the only merit which these letters possess. They afford an excellent example of the close and pressing pursuit of an antagonist, without (as we can perceive) the slightest improper feeling. There is no vaunting, no contempt; there are no anathemas, and no imputations; but many serious, and seasonable cautions, the fruit of experience and sound piety, addressed to one who, as it seems, although a teacher, has much to learn of that wisdom which should belong to men in responsible stations."

In the same number of the *Christian Spectator*, which contained the review of Dr. Woods' letters, there was a review of Bellamy's *Treatise on the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin*, in which the writer attempts to show, that Dr. Bellamy maintained the theory of Dr. Taylor; whereas it was the express object of that treatise to overthrow this very theory. This misrepresentation or perversion of the sentiments of the venerable dead, is not among the least grounds of complaint against the New Haven divines.

Yours affectionately.

## LETTER VI.

February 23, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

In the early part of the year 1832, Dr. Hawes, of Hartford, addressed a letter to Dr. Taylor, informing him that there were suspicions in the public mind, in regard to his soundness in the faith, and requesting him to "make a frank and full statement of his religious views." To this letter Dr. Taylor replied, and the two letters were published in the Connecticut Observer, of February 20th, 1832. It was supposed by the public, that the letter of Dr. Taylor, as it appeared in print, contained the "frank and full statement," which he had made to Dr. Hawes, at his particular request ; but it was afterwards ascertained that some part of the original letter was suppressed.

When Dr. Hawes was inquired of in regard to this fact, he acknowledged that the letter contained some things which he deemed it not prudent to publish, and that he wrote to Dr. Taylor, and obtained permission to strike out the objectionable parts. Thus it appeared, that the great

object of this correspondence was not so much to obtain from Dr. Taylor a "frank and full statement of his religious views," as to obtain *such* a statement as would remove from the public mind the suspicions which had been created by his previous publications. The plan, however, did not succeed. The letter, as it was published, was far from giving satisfaction. It would probably have been less satisfactory if it had been published entire; for I have understood by an individual who saw the manuscript, that those parts which were suppressed, contained the most "frank and full statement" of Dr. Taylor's *peculiar* views.

This letter contained a creed of eleven articles, expressed for the most part, in unexceptionable language. But to this were subjoined certain explanations, which seemed to many, directly to contradict the articles of the creed; or at least, to make it evident, that while Dr. Taylor employed orthodox language, he must affix to that language a meaning entirely different from that in which it is commonly received.

Some remarks on this letter were published by Dr. Tyler, in the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, a periodical published in Boston. I will insert a few extracts from these remarks. He says:

"I have never supposed that Dr. Taylor intended to deny any of the leading doctrines of the Calvinistic system. I have always supposed that he would be willing to subscribe just such a creed as that which he has given us in his letter. Is it asked then, what are the grounds of my fears? I will frankly state them. Any one, at all acquainted with ecclesiastical history must have

observed, that the great errors which have infested the church, have usually *crept in unawares*. They have originated in speculations, and 'philosophical theories,' which, at first, were not intended to call in question the commonly received doctrines, but to explain them, and relieve them of difficulties. The process has been a gradual undermining process, and such, it has appeared to me, is the tendency of Dr. Taylor's speculations. That his theories do involve principles subversive of some of the most prominent and important doctrines of his creed, I shall endeavor to show in the following remarks :

" I. The doctrine of Decrees.

" Dr. Taylor says, 'I believe that the eternal purposes of God extend to all actual events, sin not excepted ; or that God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and so executes these purposes as to leave the free and moral agency of man unimpaired.'

" Yet in the same letter Dr. Taylor says :

" 'I do not believe that sin can be proved to be the necessary means of the greatest good, and that as such God prefers it on the whole, to holiness in its stead ; or that a God of sincerity and truth punishes his creatures for doing that which, on the whole, he prefers they should do. But I do believe that it may be true, that God, *all things considered*, prefers holiness to sin in all instances in which the latter takes place.'

" How are these two parts of his creed to be reconciled ? If it 'be true that God *all things considered*, prefers holiness to sin in all instances in which the latter takes place,' it cannot be true that God has purposed or foreordained what-

soever comes to pass ; for, according to this representation, it was from eternity God's will, or choice, *all things considered*, that sin should not exist in a single instance. Consequently, it could not, in any sense, be his purpose, or his choice, that it should exist. To say that God prefers, *all things considered*, that sin should not exist, and at the same time to say that he has purposed or foreordained that it shall exist, is a palpable contradiction. It is the same as to say, that God chooses and does not choose the same thing, at the same time." "Again : It is a part of Dr. Taylor's theory, that 'God could not prevent all sin, or the present degree of sin in a moral system.' 'He *would* have prevented all sin in his moral universe, but *could not*.' Yet he foreordained whatsoever comes to pass ; that is, he foreordained that which he would have prevented if he could!! What can be a plainer contradiction ?

"II. The doctrine of Original Sin.

"Dr. Taylor says, 'I believe that all mankind, in consequence of the fall of Adam, are born destitute of holiness, and are by nature totally depraved ; in other words, that all men from the commencement of moral agency, do, without the interposition of divine grace, sin, and only sin, in all their moral conduct. I also believe, that such is the nature of the human mind, that it becomes the occasion of universal sin in all the appropriate circumstances of their existence, and that therefore they may properly be said to be sinners *by nature*.'

"To these sentiments understood according to their plain and obvious import, I can most cheer-

fully subscribe. But how are these declarations to be understood, when taken in connection with other things which Dr. Taylor has said on this subject. I have always supposed that when it is said, that in consequence of the fall of Adam all have become sinners, the language is intended to convey the idea that there is a real connection between the sin of Adam and that of his posterity; and that when it is said, all are *by nature* sinners, the meaning is, that there is something in our nature which is truly the cause or reason why all men become sinners: consequently, that human nature is not what it would have been, if sin had not existed, but has undergone some change in consequence of the original apostacy." "Now the question is, is the nature of man different from what it would have been, if sin had never entered the world? Is there any thing in human nature which is *hereditary* and the *consequence* of the original apostacy? Or is every thing pertaining to the nature of man, the immediate production of creative power? And do mankind come into the world now, with the same nature as that with which Adam was created, and which the child Jesus possessed? If so, then mankind are not *by nature* sinners. Their nature is in no sense the cause or reason of their sinning; for Adam was not *by nature* a sinner; nor was the child Jesus. They were by nature holy. Nor is it possible to perceive according to this view of the subject, that there is any real connection between the sin of Adam and the sin of his posterity. Now, unless I have entirely mistaken the import of Dr. Taylor's speculations, he does maintain that the moral nature



of all accountable beings is alike, and is the very nature which God has given." In support of this declaration, he quotes several passages from the *Christian Spectator*, and concludes this part of the subject, by saying: "To what purpose then are we told that, in consequence of Adam's fall all mankind have become sinners—and that they are sinners by *nature*, when the whole is virtually denied?

"III. The Doctrine of Regeneration.

"Dr. Taylor has expressed his belief in relation to this doctrine in the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth articles of his creed." "All this is very good; but this is not all which he has written on this subject. He has adopted theories which, in the judgment of many, at least, tend to sap the foundation of this fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. Although he explicitly admits the influence of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, yet in view of many things which he has written, it is difficult to see what necessity there can be for this divine influence." "This necessity results solely from the perverseness and obstinacy of the sinner's heart. But, according to Dr. Taylor's theory, the perverseness and obstinacy of his heart are removed antecedent to regeneration. The selfish principle is suspended. He ceases to sin, and ceases to resist. Every thing, indeed, which can be rationally supposed to render the agency of the Holy Spirit necessary in renewing the heart, is removed." He shows also from Dr. Taylor's statements, that according to his theory, "every moral being chooses what he judges will be most for his happiness. The reason, therefore, that



the sinner prefers the world to God is, that he has mistaken the true way of securing his highest happiness. What then is necessary to effect his conversion? Nothing but light to correct his mistake. So soon as he shall be *convinced* that more happiness is to be derived from God than from the world, self-love will prompt him to change the object of his preference; where then is the necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit to renew the heart?

“IV. The Doctrine of Election.

“Dr. Taylor says, ‘I believe that all who are renewed by the Holy Spirit, are elected or chosen of God from eternity that they should be holy, not according to foreseen faith or good works, but according to the good pleasure of his will.’

“This is a full and satisfactory statement of the doctrine of election. But how is this to be reconciled with other statements of his? If it be true that God, ‘*all things considered*, prefers holiness to sin in all instances in which the latter takes place,’ then it must be his choice, *all things considered*, that all men should become holy and be saved, and his infinite benevolence will prompt him to *do all in his power* to bring all men to repentance? What then becomes of the doctrine of election? *Who maketh thee to differ?* Not God, truly; for if he prefers, *all things considered*, holiness to sin, in *every instance*, he will of course do all in his power to make every individual holy. It cannot be true that he *hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*, for he would have mercy on all, if he could. The reason that a part only of the human race, and not all, are

saved, is not because God did not choose, *all things considered*, that all should be saved; but because he was unable to save all. He *would* have prevented all sin in his moral universe, but *could* not. What, then, I ask again, becomes of the doctrine of election?" Two or three passages are quoted from the *Christian Spectator*, which evidently teach the Arminian view of the doctrine of election, particularly the following:

"The means of reclaiming grace, which meet him in the word and Spirit of God, are those by which the Father draws, *induces* just such sinners as himself voluntarily to submit to Christ; and these means all favor the act of his immediate submission. To this influence he can yield, and thus be drawn of the Father. This influence he can resist, and thus harden his heart against God. Election involves nothing more, as it respects his individual case, except one fact: the *certainty* to the divine mind, whether the sinner will yield to the means of grace and voluntarily turn to God, or whether he will continue to harden his heart till the means of grace are withdrawn." See *Christian Spectator* for Dec. 1831, p. 737.

Dr. Tyler closes with the following remark: "The reader will perceive that each of the topics brought into view in the preceding remarks, might be made the subject of extended discussion; but my object has been to present a brief general view of what I conceive to be the tendency of Dr. Taylor's speculations. I have felt it the more important to do this on account of the attempts which have been made to convince the public that the points on which Dr. Taylor differs from his brethren are of trifling conse-

quence, as they relate chiefly not to the doctrines, but to the philosophy of religion. But if his philosophical theories, as I have attempted to show, do tend to sap the foundation of some of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, they are not to be regarded as harmless; nor ought the Christian community to slumber, while such strenuous efforts are making to give them currency in the world."

I have made the foregoing extracts for the purpose of giving you a general view of the state of the controversy at this period, and of the ground of dissatisfaction which extensively prevailed in regard to Dr. Taylor's speculations. The controversy was carried on between Dr. Taylor and Dr. Tyler for some time, in the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*. In the mean time, the remarks of Dr. Tyler, from which the foregoing extracts are taken, were reviewed in the *Christian Spectator*, for September, 1832. Some account of this review I will give you in my next letter.

Yours affectionately.

## LETTER VII.

March 2, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

I promised to give you some account of the Review of Dr. Tyler's remarks, which was written by Dr. Taylor, and which appeared in the Christian Spectator for September, 1832. Dr. Porter, in a letter dated Charleston, S. C., December 8, 1832, speaking of that Review, says, "That Review surprised and pained me exceedingly. Indeed, it is the most exceptionable performance of the kind that I have read. The temper of it is unmanly and unchristian. It compares with some of the sectarian pamphlets on baptism, &c., which I read in my boyhood, though I think it beats them all." That you may be able to judge of the justness of these remarks, I will give you a few extracts. What the reviewer proposes is, to examine the theories of Dr. Tyler, in relation to the depravity of man, and the divine permission of sin. In regard to the first theory, he says :

"This theory is, that the nature of man since the apostacy differs as *really* from his nature be-

fore that event as the nature of a lion which leads him to feed on flesh, differs from that of the ox, which leads him to feed on grass. Accordingly, he asks 'what inconsistency is there in supposing that there is, in man a native propensity to evil, propagated from parent to child, like other natural propensities?' On this theory, then, we would offer the following remarks: It exhibits God as the responsible author of sin. We suppose Dr. Tyler to believe, as others who have advanced the same theory maintain, that this propensity to sin is itself sinful; or, as another writer affirms, is the essence of all sin." "God, therefore, according to this theory, is the responsible author of that in man, in which the essence of all sin consists; and actually damns the soul, for being what he makes it, or causes it to be by physical laws. If Dr. Tyler should say that the propensity to sin, of which he speaks, is *innocent*, still man, as he comes into being, is doomed to sin by a natural and fatal necessity." "With such a propensity, man has not a natural ability to avoid sin. This is alike true, whether this propensity be supposed to be sinful or innocent." "Man, therefore, by the laws of propagation, is naturally unable to avoid sin, and to become holy, and therefore is not a moral agent." "According to Dr. Tyler's theory, sin must be good in *itself*, and the only real good to man, as a moral being." "According to Dr. Tyler's philosophy, man in the act of becoming holy, must be *supremely selfish*." "Dr. Tyler's theory is inconsistent with undeniable facts. Adam and satan, with his companions, all sinned. Whence came their first propensity to sin?

Whatever expedient Dr. Tyler may devise to account for the first propensity to sin in these creatures of God, one thing is certain, viz., that being without father and without mother, they did not become the subjects of such a propensity by propagation." "According to Dr. Tyler's theory, the divine lawgiver seems to have entirely mistaken, in regard to man, the proper object of a legal prohibition and penalty. The radical evil lies in the constitutional propensities which God has given to men. The divine law, therefore, it would seem, should forbid men to have, and punish them for having those constitutional propensities which they derived exclusively from their Creator." "The terms of salvation, and the exhibition of motives to comply with them, are, according to the same theory, a mockery." "The true and only reason, according to this scheme, why sinners are lost, is, not that they do not act, but that God does not." "According to Dr. Tyler's theory, what is commonly called Regeneration by the Holy Spirit, is unnecessary." "To sin, according to Dr. Tyler, must be the chief end of man." "Man's chief end is not to glorify God and enjoy him forever, and the Westminster Catechism is flatly contradicted."

In regard to Dr. Tyler's theory of the divine permission of sin, he says, "How is it that those are reprov'd who shut up the kingdom of heaven, and neither entered themselves, nor suffered others to enter, when according to Dr. Tyler, it would prove a calamity on the whole, had one more sinner reached heaven than has reached it. How is it that God says in Isaiah, v. 3., that he HAS DONE ALL THAT CAN BE DONE to bring sin-



ners to repentance, when he could do more, if he would, and, would do more, did he he not, on the whole, prefer their continued sin, to their repentance? ‘My child,’ says a father, ‘never steal, never lie; I have no pleasure at all that you should, compared with being honest and true; but then, my child,’ he proceeds, ‘I greatly prefer, *on the whole*, that you should steal and lie, at least in nine cases out of ten; for stealing and lying in these instances, will be the best things on the whole which you can do; and although I shall do every thing that can be done to secure your obedience to my law, yet I could do much more if I would; and I would do it, if I did not, on the whole, prefer your stealing and lying to honesty and truth. I have therefore determined to do that, and that only, which will secure your almost incessant stealing and lying, because on the whole, these are the best things you can do.’ Such is God, according to this theory.” “According to the theory of Dr. Tyler, God prefers sin to holiness, and decrees its existence, that thereby he may show his mercy, in the salvation of a part only of the human race, and this, when he could have secured the perfect holiness and happiness of all, and of his entire moral universe, throughout eternity; The case is this. A father throws his own children, or permits them to fall from a fearful precipice, when he not only *could* have prevented them, but *would*, had he not determined sorely to wound them all, and ultimately to destroy many of them, that he might show his mercy in healing the broken bones of others, in restoring them to comfort and happiness, and in imparting to them



the peculiar joys of so great a deliverance ! How is it, according to the same theory, that God has not, in the true and fearful import of the phrase, made a great part of mankind on purpose to damn them ?” “ To sin and be damned to all eternity is the result, and the sole result in respect to the greater part of mankind, designed, preferred, and purposed by their Maker. If this is not creating men on purpose to damn them, let any one tell what would be.” “ This theory, too, limits the goodness of God. God, according to Dr. Tyler could, if he would, have secured the perfect holiness of this universe of moral beings forever, but the perfect holiness of all would have secured the perfect happiness of all. When therefore God *could*, if he *would*, have made a universe of perfectly holy and happy beings, he preferred, decreed, and made one comprising sin and its everlasting miseries ! We ask, is this goodness ?” “ Celestial spirits, if they utter truth in their songs, praise God, not because he vindicates his law, and sustains his throne by the punishment of beings who have violated any will of his, but for exactly fulfilling the sole purpose of their creation ; they praise God for that *peculiar* delight, those *higher* and *exquisite raptures*, which they could enjoy only by means of the agonies of others in everlasting fire ! Dr. Tyler will have it that a benevolent God could not be satisfied with the perfect holiness and perfect happiness of all his moral creatures ; but to raise to some higher, conceivable perfection, the happiness of those who are saved, they must owe it, in no stinted measure to the eternal agonies of the damned ! Such is God, such is heaven, accord-

ing to this theory." "We go further, and ask, in what respect satan is more truly criminal as a tempter than God is, according to this scheme? If satan tempts, with the single purpose to secure the perpetration of iniquity, so does God, according to this scheme. If he purposes some personal advantage by the sins of others, so does God, according to this scheme. If he does it to secure the final and endless ruin of others, so, according to this scheme, does God. If Dr. Tyler should say that satan's intention is evil, and that of God benevolent, we answer first, by asking Dr. Tyler to prove this by their doings; and secondly, by affirming, that, according to the scheme in question, the evil intention of satan is the crowning excellence of the act.

"This theory, if carried out into its legitimate consequences, leads to universalism, to infidelity, and to atheism. Dr. Tyler maintains that God can secure the holiness and happiness of all his moral creatures. It follows, therefore, that God will secure the holiness and happiness of all his moral creatures. Of course, all men will be saved. But this is not all. According to this scheme, the divine authority of the Bible is subverted. This book confessedly abounds in the most unqualified declarations of the future endless misery of multitudes of the human race. But how can a book which so explicitly and abundantly contradicts demonstrable, known truth, be divine? Especially, how can a book pretend to claim an Omnipotent and benevolent God for its author, which exhibits him as creating myriads of beings, because he prefers on the

whole, their sin and everlasting misery to their perfect holiness and happiness? As a benevolent being, he must be disposed to prevent it. But according to Dr. Tyler, the Scriptures clearly teach that God will not secure the perfect holiness and happiness of his moral creation, when he can secure it. How then can a book which belies every attribute of a perfect God pretend to claim his authority?

“Apply now the principles of Dr. Tyler in another form, and atheism is the consequence. Dr. Tyler will admit that God is disposed to prevent all evil—in itself considered—throughout his creation. The argument then for atheism furnished by this theory may be thus stated. If there was a God, that is, a being of infinite power and goodness, he could prevent, and would be disposed, and therefore would in fact, prevent all evil throughout his creation. But evil exists. Therefore, there is not a being of infinite power and goodness—there is no God.” “We admit the fact, that the foregoing reasoning is that of the universalist, the infidel, and the atheist. But we ask, who furnishes and sustains its premises; and what conclusions, when the premises are admitted, are more unanswerable? We cannot but say, what we believe in the integrity of our heart, that supralapsarian Calvinists furnish the grand principle on which these conclusions rest, and combining their powers of argument in its defence, with all their means of influencing the faith of others, give to it, and to the conclusions founded on it, a delusive and fearful infallibility in the minds of thousands. The principle is, AN OMNIPOTENT

GOD BY THE MERE DINT OF POWER, CAN SECURE THE UNIVERSAL HOLINESS OF HIS MORAL CREATURES."

"Sure we are, that a very limited acquaintance with facts, would show that the principle advanced by Dr. Tyler and others is the very same which, in the hands of Voltaire and other enemies of the gospel, has spread infidelity and atheism to such a fearful extent throughout Europe, and is in fact the basis of all that latitudinarianism which rejects Christianity, and calmly reposes on false and undefined notions of the power and goodness of God."

"Indeed, we know not a more striking illustration of the appalling tendency and results of adopting an unauthorised elementary principle in reasoning. When men reason from principles which the friends of Christianity regard as false or groundless, there is hope that their errors will be exposed, and that the truth will be triumphantly defended. But when the professed advocates of Christianity espouse and vindicate the very principles, which, in the way of legitimate deduction, support the MOST DESTRUCTIVE ERROR, what are we to expect but that light will become darkness, and whole nations perish?" "The theory in question confounds right and wrong, and thus subverts all moral distinctions. It is not the name which constitutes moral action right or wrong. If sin, as Dr. Woods says of it, 'is undoubtedly calculated for the highest good of the universe,' or as another says of it, 'is of a most glorious tendency,' then it is morally right. Sin, therefore, in every instance of its occurrence, is proved by the highest kind of evidence,

to be the best kind of moral action. Thus, sin is no longer sin; vice is no longer vice. Right and wrong, according to this theory have changed places; and what God has pronounced, and man regarded, as wrong moral action, is right moral action. If Dr. Tyler should reply, as Dr. Woods does, by merely saying, that this is a wounding misrepresentation; we answer, *first*, that it is not a misrepresentation, and that no unprejudiced mind can be stultified into the belief that the necessary means of the greatest good is not an excellent thing—even the best thing in its place. We answer, *secondly*, if this representation is *wounding*, let the theory that justifies it be abandoned, and the wound will be healed."

"If Dr. Tyler should say, that he utterly denies that sin is a good thing;—we answer we are fully aware of this, and regard it as a peculiarly grateful fact. But then Dr. Tyler also asserts that sin is a good thing. And is a man to be allowed, without correction, to say that which is not true half the time, because he says that which is true the other half? Now it is this happy inconsistency which saves those who maintain this theory, from being the VERY WORST OF HERETICS." "Nothing worse can be imputed to the worst of men than the theory under consideration, imputes to God. According to this theory, God purposes sin, not for its own sake, or in itself considered, but as the means of good, i. e. on account of certain advantages resulting from it. Now the same things are true in every substantial respect of the assassin."

"Dr. Tyler, according to his principles, can not show that acts of assassination have not been,

and may not be, perpetrated from the same motives as those with which he represents God as, on the whole, preferring sin to holiness, viz. a desire to promote the general good."

"If Dr. Tyler should say, that the objections which we have brought against this theory, are the same as those which the enemies of sound doctrine commonly charge on the doctrine of the divine purpose respecting sin, we answer, that this is more easily said than proved. It is indeed readily confessed, that these objections have been often charged on that *form of the doctrine* which is taught by supralapsarian Calvinists, viz. the theory that God prefers the existence of sin rather than holiness in its stead. But it admits of a question, whether these objections were ever alleged against the true doctrine, respecting the existence of sin. Who among Arminians, or even Unitarians, at least in this age, would deny the universality of God's providential government and purposes, as the basis of confidence and submission under all evil."

These extracts are a specimen of the sentiment, style, and spirit of this Review. You can now judge whether the language of Dr. Porter in reference to it is too severe.

That the Arminians and Unitarians do not object to Dr. Taylor's views of this subject, is very true. But whether this is a recommendation of his views, is a point about which different opinions will be entertained.

Immediately after the publication of this Review, Dr. Tyler wrote to the editor inquiring whether he might be permitted to reply to it in the Christian Spectator, and was informed that

no reply could be admitted, unless it was a short letter of a page or two, accompanied by such remarks as the editor might see fit to append to it. Of this fact, Dr. Porter speaks in severe terms. In one of his letters, he says, "within a day or two, the Mirror came to hand, in which the unworthy subterfuge of the editor in refusing any reply, at least any adequate one is reprehended. This fact ought to be generally known. It shows a systematic party disingenuousness, that cannot commend itself to the Christian public, and that could hardly have been tolerated until this time if it had been understood." In another letter he says, "Dr. Taylor should have a jog as to occupying the Spirit of the Pilgrims, while the Spectator has been so closely shut up against one sentence in opposition to his views, except as quoted by its own writers for comment. No work in our country has been so narrowly conducted."

Yours, very affectionately.



## LETTER VIII.

March 7, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

In the Spirit of the Pilgrims for May, 1833, Dr. Tyler published an article in which he exposed the misrepresentations which Dr. Taylor had made of his sentiments, particularly in the Review of which I gave you some account in my last letter. Soon after this, Dr. Taylor published a letter addressed to the Editor of the Christian Spectator, the object of which was to show that he and Dr. Tyler were, after all, perfectly agreed. This was a very extraordinary production, and was, I believe, so regarded by not a few of Dr. Taylor's particular friends, as well as by other portions of the community. That after having charged Dr. Tyler with adopting theories which involve the positions that "sin is a good thing;" that "God is the responsible author of sin;" that "the divine lawgiver is a deceiver;" that "God is a criminal tempter;" that "in no sense is satan more truly criminal as a tempter than God is;" that "we ought to praise God for all the sin which we and others have ever com-

mitted ;” and after having affirmed, that nothing but the inconsistency of Dr. Tyler saves him from being “THE VERY WORST OF HERETICS,” and that his theories, “if carried out into their legitimate consequences, lead to UNIVERSALISM, TO INFIDELITY, AND TO ATHEISM ;” that Dr. Taylor, after having said all this, and much more to the same effect, should come forward and affirm, that “we perfectly agree in EVERY PARTICULAR respecting these important points,” was not a little surprising. Yet this he did, and that too without retracting a single position which he had taken, and without showing, or attempting to show, that Dr. Tyler had retracted anything.

Dr. Tyler published in a pamphlet some remarks on this letter, which closed the controversy between him and Dr. Taylor. In these remarks, after bringing into view a number of points which he had explicitly maintained, and comparing them with the statements of Dr. Taylor, he proceeds to examine Dr. Taylor’s mode of reasoning, by which he attempts to show that there is no difference of opinion between them. He says :

“He (Dr. Taylor) does not pretend that I have formally retracted any of the positions which he has controverted. But because we are agreed on certain points which have never been a matter of dispute between us, he *infers* that we must be agreed on all the points in debate. As if he should say, Dr. Taylor and I are agreed that there is a God, and that the Bible is his word, therefore our views harmonize on every point of Christian doctrine. Now any one can see, that in this reasoning, the conclusion is broader than

the premises. Dr. Taylor has said, 'It is confessedly unauthorized to charge opinions upon any man on the ground of mere inference.' Yet this is the very thing which he has done throughout the whole of his last letter. He *infers* that I admit certain positions (in the face of my most explicit declarations to the contrary,) because I admit certain other positions.

"I will endeavor to illustrate Dr. Taylor's mode of reasoning by one or two examples. Suppose that a Unitarian and a Calvinist are disputing in respect to the doctrine of the trinity. The Unitarian charges the Calvinist with maintaining that there are three Gods, and goes on to show that there is but one God. The Calvinist replies, you misrepresent me, I have never maintained that there are three Gods—I have shown that the doctrine of the trinity does not involve any such sentiment. I believe as firmly as you do, that there is but one God. I perceive, then, rejoins the Unitarian, that we are perfectly agreed. I now understand you to deny the doctrine of the trinity. Again: Suppose A. and B. are discussing the question whether all men will be saved. Says A. to B. you maintain that Christ died for only a part of the human race, whereas the scriptures say that he tasted death for every man. B. replies, I do not believe as you represent me. I admit that the atonement of Christ is sufficient for all men, and that salvation is freely offered to all. There is, then, replies A. no difference between us. I understand you to admit that all men will be saved. These are exact specimens of Dr. Taylor's mode of reasoning. He says, 'Dr. Tyler does not believe, but denies that sin

is the best thing, or a good thing in any sense.' From this he *infers* that I agree with him in rejecting the positions, that 'the existence of sin is, on the whole, for the best,' and that 'God, *all things considered*, prefers sin to holiness in all instances in which the former takes place'—positions which he knows I have most explicitly and uniformly maintained."

Dr. Tyler closes his remarks with a summary view of the main points of difference between him and Dr. Taylor, and of their practical importance. He says:

1. "Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that God could not have prevented all sin in a moral system."

We have seen the importance which Dr. Taylor attaches to this point of difference. In the Review mentioned in my last letter, he represents the denial of this position, as leading to Universalism, to Infidelity, and to Atheism. "I also regard it as important; for it must, as it seems to me, very materially affect our views of the character and government of God. According to this statement, God has created a universe of moral beings which he cannot govern. Were I to adopt this position, I could not regard Jehovah as an Almighty being; nor could I feel the least assurance that he will be able to accomplish his purposes or fulfil his promises. If his creatures are so independent of him, that he cannot control their moral actions at pleasure, what assurance can he give us, that every Saint and every Angel will not yet apostatize, and spread desolation through the moral universe. Besides, if God has not a perfect dominion over the hearts

and moral conduct of his creatures, how can we consistently pray that God would incline our hearts, or the hearts of others? And how can we regard the afflictions, brought upon us by the agency of men, as divine judgments; or the blessings we receive, through their instrumentality, as divine mercies? This view of the subject, as it seems to me, tends directly to discourage prayer, and takes away the principal motives to submission and gratitude.

2. "Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that the existence of sin is not, on the whole, for the best, and that a greater amount of good would have been secured had all God's creatures remained holy, than will result from the present system.

"According to this view of the subject, as it appears to me, God must look with everlasting regret upon the moral universe. While he prefers, all things considered, that all his creatures should be holy and happy, and while he is doing all in his power to make them so, he must be literally grieved and unhappy to find his efforts constantly defeated. And is this the view which the scriptures give us of the EVER BLESSED GOD—that God who has said, *my council shall stand, and I will do ALL MY PLEASURE*. Besides—the above position subverts the doctrine of special grace. If God regards universal holiness, as, on the whole, desirable, it must be his desire, all things considered, that every individual should be holy; and he must of course do all in his power to make every individual holy. What, then, becomes of the doctrine of special, distinguishing, sovereign, and electing grace?

3. "Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that God, all things considered, prefers holiness to sin, in all instances in which the latter takes place.

"This position, as I have shown, utterly subverts the doctrine of decrees. It amounts, in my view, to a declaration that God does not in any sense prefer, and of course, has not decreed the existence of sin; for sin certainly would not exist, if in *all instances*, holiness should exist in its stead. How is it possible for God to prefer, *on any account*, the existence of sin, *in any instance*, if, *all things considered*, that is, *on all accounts*, he prefers something else in its stead, *in all instances*? I have also shown that this position subverts the doctrine of election.

4. "Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that mankind come into the world with the same nature, in kind, as that with which Adam was created.

"According to this view of the subject, Adam was not created holy, nor is there, as I can see, any real connexion between the sin of Adam and that of his posterity. This position, therefore, entirely subverts the doctrine of original sin, as generally maintained by Calvinists. Besides; if this position be true, infants are *in no sense* sinners, and do not need to be born again, nor to be redeemed by the blood of Christ. If admitted to heaven, they will be accepted on the ground of their own righteousness, and without regeneration, contrary to the express declarations of Christ and the apostle. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heav-



en. By the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified.'

5. "Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that the only reason that the posterity of Adam do not exhibit the same moral character which Adam exhibited, is not that they have a different nature, but that they are placed in different circumstances.

"This, if I mistake not, is the precise ground which the opposers of Calvinism have uniformly taken, when controverting the doctrine of original sin; and it seems to me to be intimately connected with those systems of belief which entirely discard the doctrines of grace. Indeed, if the depravity of man is owing solely to the circumstances in which he is placed, it would seem that no other remedy would be needed for it but a change of circumstances. Consequently, a man does not need a radical change of heart by the power of the Holy Spirit.

6. "Dr. Taylor and I differ in regard to the nature of selfishness. According to him, selfishness does not consist in making our own happiness our ultimate end, but in love of the world, or in preferring the world to God, as our portion or chief good.

7. "Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that 'self-love is the primary cause of all moral action.' He says, "The being constituted with a capacity for happiness, desires to be happy, and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived; and as in this respect he judges, or estimates their relative value, so he chooses one or the other as his chief good.'

“This I regard as one of the most dangerous parts of Dr. Taylor’s system; for it affects the very essence of religion—the very nature of holiness. According to him, self-love, or the desire of happiness, is the grand principle by which every being, whether sinful or holy, is actuated. All have the same ultimate end. ‘Of all specific voluntary action, the happiness of the agent, in some form, is the ultimate end.’ According to this statement, the distinction of moral character which exists among men, does not arise from the fact that they have different ultimate ends, but from the fact, that they adopt different means to obtain the same ultimate end. The reason that one is holy, and another sinful, is, the one seeks his own happiness by choosing God as his portion and chief good; the other seeks his own happiness, by choosing the world as his portion or chief good. Both have a supreme regard to their own happiness. Consequently there is no radical distinction between holiness and sin. Both may be traced to the same principle of action. I cannot but say, what I honestly believe, that the religion which is in accordance with this theory, is a selfish, and of course, a spurious religion.”

“Besides—according to this theory, depravity consists in ignorance; and all that is necessary to effect the conversion of sinners, is, to enlighten them as to the best means of securing their highest happiness. Regeneration, therefore, by the agency of the Holy Spirit cannot be necessary.

8. “Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that sinners may so resist the grace of God as to render it impossible for God to convert them.

He says, 'I do not believe that the grace of God, can be truly said to be irresistible, in the primary and proper import of the term. But I do believe that in *all cases*, it may be resisted by man as a free moral agent; and that when it is effectual to conversion, it is *unresisted*.' He also says, 'Free moral agents *can* do wrong under all possible preventing influence. Using their powers as they *may* use them, they will sin; and no one can show that some such agents *will not* use their powers as they may use them. This possibility that free agents *will* sin, remains, (suppose what else you will,) so long as moral agency remains; and how can it be proved that a thing *will not be*, when for aught that appears it *may be*? When, in view of all the facts and evidence in the case, it remains true that it *may be*, what evidence or proof can exist that it *will not be*?'

9. "Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that antecedent to regeneration, the selfish principle is suspended in the sinner's heart, that he ceases to sin, and uses the means of regeneration, with motives which are neither right nor wrong.

"The tendency of these views, I have pointed out at length in my *Strictures and Vindication*, to which I beg leave to refer the reader. If I mistake not, I have shown that they lead to the subversion of important doctrines, and deeply affect the interests of evangelical religion."

"It has sometimes been said, that the differences between Dr. Taylor and his brethren, relate solely to theories, and that they are agreed as to all the important facts taught in the Bible. This, however, in my view, is entirely a mistake. The

question whether God was able to prevent sin in a moral system is a question of fact. So the questions whether sin is, on the whole, for the best,—whether God, *all things considered*, prefers holiness to sin in all instances in which the latter takes place—whether mankind come into the world with the same nature, in kind, as that with which Adam was created—whether self-love is the primary cause of moral action—and whether the selfish principle is suspended in the sinner's heart antecedent to regeneration, are questions relating to matters of fact; and questions too, which have an important bearing upon the system of divine truth. Our views of christian doctrine, and of experimental religion, must be materially modified by the manner in which these questions are decided."

I have made the foregoing extracts for the purpose of enabling you to see at a single glance the prominent points on which the New Haven divines differ from their brethren. That after all which they have said, they should now claim that there is no difference, or at least no important difference between them and their brethren, is truly surprising. Dr. Tyler closes his remarks with the following observations on this point.

He says: "What I have maintained is, that he (Dr. Taylor) has adopted principles which, when carried out in their legitimate consequences, lead to the subversion of fundamental doctrines. It is on this account that I regard his errors as dangerous, and the difference between us as important. Still I have not attached to them the importance given to them by Dr. Taylor. I have never said, that nothing but his in-

consistency saves him from being 'the very worst of heretics'—that his theories 'lead to Universalism, to Infidelity, and to Atheism'—and that they involve such horrid blasphemy as he has charged upon my theories. Surely, Dr. Taylor and his associates are the last men in the world, who ought to say that the differences between them and their brethren are of little importance. If they really believe that their brethren do maintain such shocking and blasphemous errors as they have imputed to them in the *Christian Spectator*, they ought, in order to be consistent, to renounce all fellowship with them at once. How can they hold fellowship with men who maintain that 'sin is a good thing, even the best thing?'

"Yet they have imputed this sentiment not only to me, but to Dr. Bellamy, to Dr. Hopkins, to Dr. Strong, to Dr. Woods, and to all who adopt their views in relation to the divine permission of sin. They have charged them with holding sentiments which involve the positions 'that the Divine Lawgiver is a deceiver'—that 'God is a criminal tempter,' and many other consequences which no sober man can contemplate without horror. And do they wonder that their brethren are dissatisfied? Can they suppose that the ministers and churches of New England, will look with indifference upon such representations of doctrines which they have ever regarded as the truth of God, and which were taught by those eminent divines whose praise is in all the churches? It is truly with an ill grace that they should now pretend, that there is no difference between them and their brethren. They are the men who

have magnified this difference, and attached to it momentous consequences. If they are convinced of their error, let them frankly and honorably retract. But let them not, in one breath, charge their brethren with maintaining sentiments which lead to the VERY WORST OF HERESIES, and involve the most horrid blasphemies; and in the next, say, we are perfectly agreed. This, surely, is not the way to heal the bleeding wounds of Zion, and to restore peace to the heritage of the Lord."

This pamphlet, as I observed, closed the controversy between Dr. Tyler and Dr. Taylor. Although Dr. Taylor had given to the controversy so serious an aspect by charging upon his opponent the most blasphemous errors; and although Dr. Tyler called upon him in this pamphlet to retract his charges or substantiate them—yet he has not deigned to do either. Meanwhile, the watchword of the party for the last three or four years has been, "No difference."

Yours very affectionately,



## LETTER IX.

March 13, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

In 1833, Dr. Griffin published his treatise on "The Doctrine of Divine Efficiency," in which he examines the theories of the New Haven Divines so far as they have a bearing on this subject ; and shows most conclusively, that many of their positions are essentially Arminian. This is a valuable work, and ought to be extensively circulated and read. No answer to it has as yet been published.

On the 10th of September, 1833, a convention of ministers was held in East Windsor, to take into consideration the expediency of establishing a new Theological Seminary in Connecticut. This was a very interesting meeting. Two days were spent in prayerful deliberation, during which time, the great Head of the Church seemed to grant them special tokens of his presence. There appeared to be an unusual spirit of prayer. Nothing like a spirit of party was apparent in their deliberations ; but great spirituality and harmony of feeling pervaded the meeting. Sen-

sible of the responsibility resting upon them, they acted in the fear of God. "The great and all-absorbing inquiry was, what do the honor of God, and the interest of his kingdom demand? They were unanimous in their result. Fully satisfied that they had discovered the path of duty, they resolved to go forward in the strength of the Lord." Accordingly, they organized themselves into a Pastoral Union, formed a constitution, and appointed a Board of Trustees. Shortly after, the Trustees proceeded to locate the Institution, to elect a Faculty, and to provide the necessary buildings, library, &c. On the 13th of May, 1834, the corner stone of the Seminary edifice was laid with appropriate services; and on the same day, the President and Professor of Ecclesiastical History were inducted into office. In October, of the same year, the Professor of Biblical Literature was inaugurated, and the Seminary went into full operation with a respectable number of students. Hitherto the Lord has seemed to prosper the infant Seminary far beyond the expectations of its founders. May it continue to enjoy his smiles, and be made instrumental of incalculable good. The reasons which led to the establishment of this Seminary, are fully set forth in the "Appeal to the Public," published by the Trustees, in October, 1834—a copy of which I take the liberty to send you. This appeal was occasioned by an attack made upon the Seminary in a Manifesto from the Theological Professors in Yale College. I must give you some account of this Manifesto.

The Rev. Daniel Dow, a member of the Cor-

poration of Yale College, having been appointed on a committee to attend the examination of the Theological School, and being called upon to make a report to the Corporation, at their annual meeting in September, 1834, took occasion to object to some of the doctrines taught in the School, and to suggest that the Professor of Didactic Theology had taught and published sentiments inconsistent with the creed on which this Professorship was founded. This led to some discussion in the Corporation, to a conference with the Professors, and to the Manifesto of which I have just spoken.

It may be proper here to state, that since 1722 until recently, all the officers of Yale College have been required to declare their assent to the Confession of Faith contained in the Saybrook Platform, which is almost entirely the same as that of the Westminster divines. But within a few years past, the test-law of the College has been repealed; so that now, neither the President nor Professors are obliged to give their assent to any Confession of Faith; nor are the corporation authorized to dismiss them from office on account of any religious opinions whatever. This applies to the theological no less than to the academical Professors, with the exception of the Professor of Didactic Theology.

But the repeal of the law could not affect this Professorship, because there were certain stipulations with the founders, which it was beyond the power of the corporation to repeal. The principal subscribers to the fund, made the following requisition: "Every Professor, who shall

receive the income or revenue of this fund, shall be examined as to his faith, and be required to make a written declaration thereof agreeable to the following: 'I hereby declare my free assent to the Confession of Faith, and Ecclesiastical Discipline, agreed upon by the Churches of the State in 1708—(i. e. the Saybrook Platform.) If at any future period, any person who fills the chair of this Professorship, holds or teaches doctrines contrary to those referred to, it shall be the duty of the Corporation of the College to dismiss him from office forthwith; and if they do not dismiss him, then we reserve to our heirs the right to demand the several sums which we have paid, or may hereafter pay respectively.'"

The Corporation, after reciting the foregoing in a preamble, passed the following vote: "This Board doth accordingly found and establish in this College, on said fund, a Professorship of Didactic Theology, on the terms, conditions, and limitations expressed in said instrument signed by Timothy Dwight and others."

It would seem, from the foregoing statement, that the Professor of Didactic Theology is required to give his unqualified assent to the Confession of Faith contained in the Saybrook Platform. It was so understood by Mr. Dow when he made his report to the Corporation. But the Professors in their Manifesto, defend the principle that a subscription to articles of Faith, is made only for "substance of doctrine." They admit that Dr. Taylor does hold and teach doctrines contrary to those contained in the Saybrook Platform. They say, moreover, that while Professor elect, he "had certain knowledge,

from personal intercourse with the founders, that had he embraced every minute doctrine of the Confession, it would have been considered a decisive disqualification for the office." This is certainly a very extraordinary declaration; and it naturally suggests several inquiries.

What could be the object of the founders, to require their Professor to give his unqualified assent to a creed, and then inform him that if he did comply with their requisition *fully* and *sincerely*, they should consider him disqualified for the office? Was such a thing ever heard of before on the face of the globe? Why did they not prescribe such a creed as they should be willing to have their Professor subscribe, *ex animo*, and without reservation? Or if it was their intention that assent should be given to the creed "for substance of doctrine," why did they not say so? And if Dr. Taylor intended to give his assent only "for substance of doctrine," why did he not say so? If he had informed the Corporation, that he could not give an unqualified assent to the creed, and if the Corporation had been authorized by the founders to accept, and had actually accepted of a qualified assent, the case would be different.

But it does not appear that the Corporation are authorized to accept of any but an unqualified assent; and so far as appears, the assent given by Dr. Taylor was unqualified. And is the doctrine to be maintained and defended, that when persons give their assent to Confessions of Faith in the most solemn manner, and in the most unqualified language, they are not to be understood as meaning what they affirm?

Besides—on what is this Professorship founded, and for what cause are the Corporation required to dismiss the Professor from office? The founders, so far as appears from their statutes, make it the duty of the Corporation to dismiss the Professor from office, if he holds or teaches doctrines contrary to those contained in the Platform. Yet it is admitted that the present Professor does hold and teach doctrines contrary to those above referred to. But it is contended, that he is not liable, on this account, to impeachment, because he had “certain knowledge from personal intercourse with the founders,” that it is their will that he should hold and teach doctrines contrary to the Confession to which they have required his free assent in the most unqualified terms. What then is the creed by which this Professor is bound? Is it the Saybrook Platform “for substance of doctrine?” But this is not mentioned by the founders. And if we may suppose it to have been so understood, how is it to be ascertained what is implied in subscription to a creed “for substance of doctrine?” How much may be rejected, and still the substance be retained? Who shall draw the line, and where shall the line be drawn?

But I have still another question in relation to this subject. Can a person be truly said to receive a confession of Faith “for substance of doctrine,” when in his view that confession contains the most destructive errors? According to Dr. Taylor, the Saybrook Platform contains principles which lead by legitimate consequence to “the very worst of heresies”—“to Universalism, to Infidelity, and to Atheism,”—principles



which involve the positions, that "sin is a good thing"—"good in itself"—"the only real good to man"—that "when men sin, they do the very best thing they can do"—that "God is the responsible author of sin"—that "the terms of salvation, and the exhibition of motives to comply with them, are a delusive mockery"—that "God is a criminal tempter"—that "in no respect is satan more truly criminal as a tempter than God is"—that "we ought to praise God for all the sin which we and others have ever committed"—that "the worst kind of moral action is the best"—and that "mankind are bound to believe that they shall please and glorify God more by sin, than by obedience, and therefore to act accordingly." Now is it possible for a man to receive "for substance of doctrine," a Confession of Faith, when he believes it to contain such horrid and blasphemous errors?

In this Manifesto, as I have already remarked, the Professors take notice of the establishment of the Seminary at East Windsor, and endeavor to make the impression that the founders and friends of the new institution are laboring under a delusion in supposing that any important errors are taught in the New Haven School; and that under the influence of this delusion, they have gone forward to establish a Seminary which is not called for, and ought not to be patronized by the Christian public. This attack called forth the Appeal of the Trustees, which I have already mentioned. To this Appeal, the Professors replied, in a manner and with a spirit, which did them little credit. About the same time the Rev. Mr. Dow published a pamphlet, the object

of which is to show what is the New Haven Divinity. It is made up of extracts from the writings of the New Haven Divines, together with some short comments, suited to show the nature and tendency of their doctrines. This book is very useful to any one who wishes to ascertain what the new divinity of New England is, without looking over the various publications in which it has been taught for the last eight or ten years.

I am yours, very affectionately.

## LETTER X.

March 15, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

You desire to know what has been Dr. Beecher's course in relation to the recent controversies in New England, and to what extent he has identified himself with the New Haven divines. I regret exceedingly that there should be any occasion for such inquiries. A minister of Dr. Beecher's age and standing in the church, ought to be "an epistle known and read by all men." There ought to be no cause for doubt or suspicion in regard to his theological opinions. And yet, I suppose it to be true, that notwithstanding all which has been said and written by himself and others, there are even now, very different opinions in regard to his doctrinal views. There are those who do not hesitate to affirm that, on most points at least, he is a thorough Calvinist, and that his sentiments are entirely opposed to the New Haven speculations; while there are others who are equally confident that his views, in the main, coincide with those of Dr. Taylor. How he has contrived to make these different impressions on the minds of different individu-

als, and I may add, on the minds of the same individuals, at different times, is a question which some have found it very difficult to answer.

That he does not agree on all points with the New Haven divines, is certainly true, if any confidence is to be reposed in the statements contained in his "Views in Theology," recently published. On the doctrine of original sin, for instance, his views and theirs are irreconcilably at variance. Instead of maintaining that "mankind come into the world with the same nature in kind as that with which Adam was created," that "they possess no constitutional propensity to sin," that "infants are innocent," or have "no moral character," that "they sustain the same relation to the moral government of God as brute animals," he maintains directly the opposite of these opinions. He says :

"It would seem that I am supposed to hold the Pelagian doctrine on the subject ; that I deny that Adam was the federal head and representative of his race—that the covenant was made not only with Adam, but also with his posterity ; that the guilt of his sin was imputed to them ; that there is any such thing as native depravity ; or that infants are depraved. That on the contrary I hold and teach, that infants are innocent, and as pure as Adam before the fall ; and that each one stands or falls for himself, as he rises to personal accountability ; and that there is no such thing as original sin, descending from Adam by ordinary generation ; and that original sin is not sin, or in any sense deserving of God's wrath and curse. Now every one of these assumed errors of my faith,

I deny to be my faith." He says also, "Adam was created holy, and placed in a state of probation, the consequences of which were to extend not only to himself, but to his posterity. If he continued holy, they would be born holy. If he became a sinner, his children would be born depraved. In the hour of temptation, he fell, and lost FOR A WORLD the inheritance of life, and entailed upon it the sad inheritance of depravity and wo. For, if by *one* man's offence death reigned by one, how did death reign by one man's offence, if the depravity of his race was not the consequence of his sin? If his posterity are born holy, (innocent) and become sinners by their own act, uninfluenced by what Adam did, then death enters the world not by one man; but by every man. And so death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; passed upon infants possessing a depraved nature, though they had not committed actual sin. They, as well as adults are subject to pain and death. They, as well as adults, need a Saviour, and a change of heart by the Holy Ghost to fit them for heaven." He says again, "Original sin is the effect of Adam's sin upon the constitution of his race, in consequence of his being their federal head and representative, by divine appointment or covenant." "It consists in the perversion of those constitutional powers and susceptibilities, which in Adam before the fall eventuated in actual and perfect obedience, and which, in their perverted condition by the fall, eventuate in actual and total depravity." "It is a bias or tendency of nature to actual sin, which baffles all motives, and all influence, short of Omnipot-

tence, to prevent its eventuation in total actual depravity, or to restore the perverted will and affections to holy obedience." "It is denominated by Edwards, and justly, an exceedingly evil and depraved nature."

In these passages, Dr. Beecher advances the very principles which Dr. Taylor represents as involving the positions that "God is the responsible author of sin," that "to sin is the very end of man's creation, the highest end of his being, the chief end of man," that "man is doomed to sin by a natural and fatal necessity," that "he is naturally unable to avoid sin, and become holy, and therefore is not a moral agent," "that the terms of salvation, and the exhibition of motives to comply with them are a delusive mockery," that "the true and only reason why sinners are lost, is not, that they do not act, but that God does not," and that "in respect to any capacity for happiness from the objects of right affection, man as he is constituted by his Maker, is like a stone or corpse."

On the subject of God's ability to prevent sin, and sanctify the hearts of men, the statements of Dr. Beecher are also entirely opposed to those which have come from the New Haven school. Just notice the following statement of Dr. Taylor: "How is it that God says, Isaiah v. 4, that he has done all that can be done to bring sinners to repentance, when he could do more if he would, and would do more, did he not, on the whole, prefer their continued sin to their repentance? 'My child,' says a father, 'never steal; never lie; I have no pleasure at all that you should, compared with being honest and true.



‘But then, my child,’ he proceeds, ‘I greatly prefer, on the whole, that you should steal and lie, at least in nine cases out of ten; for stealing and lying, in these instances, will be the best thing you can do; and though I shall do every thing that can be done to secure your obedience to my law, yet I could do much more if I would; and I would do it, if I did not, on the whole, prefer your stealing and lying to honesty and truth.’” Compare this with the following from Dr. Beecher :

“That God is able, by his direct and immediate power to approach the mind in every faculty, and to touch all the springs of action and affection, I have never denied or doubted. And that he is able, by the direct interposition of his power, so to rectify the mind of man as disordered by the fall, as that the consequence would be the immediate, unperverted exercise of the will and affections in obedience, is just as evident as that God can create minds in such a condition that they will, in these respects, go right from the beginning. I have no sympathy for the opinion that it depends on sinners whether they be regenerated or not, in the day of his power—or that God DOES ALL HE CAN, and leaves the event of submission or not, to rebel man. The passages quoted to prove such an assertion are misunderstood and perverted. The texts, ‘what could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it,’ (Isa. v. 4.) and ‘he could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief,’ and other kindred passages do not teach that God is ever efficaciously resisted by any sinner whom he attempts to subdue, or that there

is any sinner on earth so stubborn and obstinate that God could not reconcile him if it seemed good in his sight. The limitation is of God's unerring wisdom, and is the same as when it is said, he cannot deny himself, or cannot lie, or where God himself says, 'though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people.' "

This, you will perceive, is in direct opposition to the views of Dr. Taylor. And not only so, Dr. Beecher has here advanced the very principle which, according to Dr. Taylor, "leads to Universalism, to Infidelity, and to Atheism," "the principle which, in the hands of Voltaire, and other enemies of the gospel, has spread infidelity and atheism to such a fearful extent throughout Europe," and which involves all the horrid blasphemies which he has charged upon Drs. Woods and Tyler.

A large part of Dr. Beecher's book is adapted to make a favorable impression upon the minds of orthodox readers. On all the subjects of which he treats, except that of moral agency, his statements, so far as they go, will be regarded as generally sound. On this topic, however, (moral agency) he has advanced principles which lead inevitably to Arminian conclusions. And on some other topics, his statements do not contain a full view of his sentiments. On the doctrine of regeneration, for instance, no one would conjecture from what he has published, "that he does not believe in the direct and immediate agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration."

Yet such is not his belief, unless he has quite recently altered his opinion. He maintains, as I

happen to know from repeated conversations with him on the subject, that the Holy Spirit never operates *directly* on the heart in regeneration, (except perhaps in the case of infants, idiots, &c.) but only through the medium of truth and motives—that the influence of the Spirit is a *persuasive* influence, analogous to the influence which one man exerts over the mind of another. This is what has been denominated the doctrine of “Divine moral suasion.” It is the same doctrine which was maintained by a certain popular preacher of the present day, when he said, “Were I as eloquent as the Holy Ghost, I could convert sinners as well as He,” and the same doctrine which is taught by Mr. Finney, in his sermon on making a new heart, in which he says, “In renewing men, the Spirit employs means. He does not come and take right hold of the heart, and perform an operation upon it; but he presents motives; he persuades by means of truth, and the heart is overcome. To change men’s hearts requires only the presentation of truth by the Spirit of God. His influence differs not at all from that of the preacher except in degree.” This sermon Mr. Finney preached in Boston, at the time of which Dr. Beecher speaks when he says, “It will be long before I again hear so much truth with as little to object to, in the manner of its exhibition, in the same space of time.”

Most of Dr. Beecher’s book, as I have already intimated, is adapted to make the impression that he does not adopt the peculiarities of the New Haven School. And many things which he has, at divers times, said to his intimate friends who

he knew were opposed to these peculiarities, (such as Dr. Porter, Dr. Woods, Dr. Tyler, Mr. Nettleton, &c.) have been adapted to make the same impression on their minds. He has sometimes spoken freely, and in terms of strong disapprobation of Dr. Taylor's writings, and of the manner in which he had conducted the controversy. He has also made such statements in regard to his own sentiments, as to convince them that he could not adopt the New Haven opinions.

But notwithstanding all this, truth obliges me to say, that, in my apprehension, Dr. Beecher is in a high degree responsible for the spread of these opinions. It is through his influence, more than that of any other man, that they have gained so much favor in the eyes of the community. He has been an apologist for them. He has had no sympathy with those who have been distressed on account of them; but has uniformly frowned on every expression of alarm. He has insisted that the New Haven divines are orthodox, and that their sentiments are fraught with no dangerous tendencies. He has expressed it as his "full and deliberate belief," that these sentiments "will prevail and predominate both in New England and elsewhere." He has occasionally thrown out intimations "that the theology of New England is running down to natural inability, and old Calvinism—and waiting God's time, and formality, and Triangularism,"—that "old Calvinism must go down,"—that, "the system of Calvinism needs to be examined and discussed by a new and original investigation of all the points,"—and that the

result will be, "the sifting out of false philosophy," and the burning up of "wood, hay, and stubble," enough of which he thinks there is even in New England, "if brought out and laid on one pile to make a great bonfire." Although I write "*currente calamo*," I am not writing at random. I state nothing of which I have not the proof in my possession.

In the mean time, the New Haven divines and all their adherents, have considered Dr. Beecher as agreeing with them in sentiment, and siding with them in their controversies. They have not hesitated to make use of his name, in public and in private, in conversation, in letters, and through the press, to promote the prevalence of their views; and so far as I have known, he has not been disposed to contradict their statements. He has seemed, at least, to be willing to have them understand that he did accord with them in their views and measures.

Dr. Taylor has been in the habit of submitting his controversial articles to Dr. Beecher for inspection previous to their publication. This was the fact in regard to the Review of Dr. Tyler's remarks, published in the *Christian Spectator*, for September, 1832, some account of which I gave you in my seventh letter. It was true in regard to Dr. Taylor's communications for the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, in his controversy with Dr. Tyler. In one instance, Dr. Beecher took so much liberty with a communication, that Dr. Taylor in a subsequent number had occasion to make the following remark: "Here I shall first advert to an error in phraseology which, though not *my own*, occurred in some instances, in my

reply to Dr. Tyler's remarks. This arose from the insertion of a passage, while my reply was passing through the press by one of the conductors of the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*. For the liberty thus taken, I am not disposed to censure my friend, considering our long intimacy, and the coincidence of our views on theological subjects, and the desire from which it sprung of giving an additional illustration of my opinions."

That Dr. Beecher is the "friend," here referred to, was well understood, and you will perceive that Dr. Taylor here, in this public manner, claims "a coincidence of views," with Dr. Beecher, "on theological subjects." This was published under Dr. Beecher's own eye, and suffered to pass without contradiction. All the young men who have come out from the New Haven School, and all others who have adopted the peculiar sentiments of that School have represented Dr. Beecher as an advocate of these sentiments. It has been proclaimed by them through the length and breadth of the land; and it is owing to their representations more than to those of any other persons, that the orthodoxy of Dr. Beecher has been so extensively suspected. Some of his intimate friends, particularly Mr. Nettleton, did for a long time feel authorised to contradict these representations. He did suppose, from statements which Dr. Beecher made to him, and from writings which he read to him, and which he talked of publishing, that he did not agree with Dr. Taylor, and that he intended he should so understand him. Accordingly, when he found at the South, reports in circulation that Dr. Beecher accorded in his doctri-



nal views with the New Haven divines, he took the liberty to contradict them. Wherever he went he vindicated Dr. Beecher, and it was in consequence of his representations that Dr. Miller and Dr. Green were led to repose that confidence in Dr. Beecher which was expressed in their letters to him which he exhibited on his trial. But in 1830, Dr. Beecher called Mr. Nettleton to an account for reporting that he did not agree with Dr. Taylor. Since that time, he has not felt at liberty to contradict the representations which the friends of the New Haven Divinity have been continually making.

From what I have written, you will perceive that in the estimation of some of his brethren, the course of Dr. Beecher has not been, in all respects, so consistent as it might have been. What you experienced when you heard him preach two sermons during the session of the last General Assembly is a specimen of the experience of some of his brethren for a course of years. Their hearts have been alternately rejoiced and pained. They have loved Dr. Beecher. They have often listened to his voice with intense delight. They have blessed God for the good accomplished through his instrumentality, and they have been grieved and distressed that his influence should be perverted to promote the prevalence of what they believe to be dangerous error.

For many years after his first settlement in New England, he enjoyed the entire confidence of his brethren. He, and Dr. Porter and Dr. Harvey, and Dr. Tyler, were located in neighboring parishes, and lived on terms of the great-

est intimacy. He and Mr. Nettleton were true yokefellows in the cause of revivals. In those days, we heard from him no suspicions of a tendency in New England ministers to "hyper-Calvinism and antinomian fatality;" and no intimations of the necessity of a reform in the system of New England orthodoxy. Those were days of peace and harmony, and brotherly love among the ministers of New England. But we have fallen on other times. That harmony of sentiment which so long prevailed exists no longer. New doctrines have been broached, and are zealously propagated; and to what extent the defection may be suffered to go, is known only to Him who seeth the end from the beginning. But it is consoling to reflect that Zion's God reigneth, and that he is able to bring light out of darkness, and order out of confusion, and to overrule all the commotions of this sin-distracted world for the promotion of his own glory, and the greatest possible good.

I am yours, very affectionately.

## LETTER XI.

March 20, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

You will naturally inquire to what extent does the new divinity prevail in New England?—in other words, how large a proportion of the New England ministers adopt the peculiar sentiments of the New Haven School? On this point, I can only give you my opinion, as I have no data from which to make out an accurate calculation. Different individuals would doubtless give different answers to this question. The New Haven divines would probably tell you that their views prevail very extensively in New England; that quite a large proportion of the ministers adopt them. I am satisfied, however, that their estimates are far from being correct.

It appears from Dr. Porter's letter to Dr. Beecher, that when he informed him that one of his brethren was dissatisfied on hearing him preach a certain sermon, Dr. Beecher acknowledged that probably three fourths of his brethren would have had the same feelings in the same circumstances.

In a letter to a friend, dated August 6, 1832, Dr. Porter says: "Our orthodox community for near a century had been but little disturbed, till this new luminary appeared, and volunteered to shed darkness on the world. He wrote and talked and talked and wrote; and what has been the result? 'The great body of ministers said for a while, 'we do not know what he means.' He has been reputed sound in the faith, and all this vaunted originality, consisting of novelty and obscurity in diction, and paradoxical boldness, is at bottom rather bad taste, than bad theology. He complained of the obtuseness of readers that could not understand him;—wrote again—and then again; and then complained bitterly that so many misunderstood him. After a long time, a few men say, 'Dr. Taylor is right, and Calvinism is wrong'—a few others, much fewer than he supposes, say, 'Dr. Taylor is right, and Calvinism is right too—he is a consistent Calvinist.' This latter number is not one tenth of the New England ministers, and not one hundredth of those that are thirty-five years old. The great body of ministers now say he is wrong—not altogether so, of course—but wrong on his own favorite points."

Such was the language of Dr. Porter in 1832. Dr. Woods, in his eighth letter published in 1830, says: "I feel myself constrained to say, that the theory which you adopt in distinction from the common theory, appears to me, generally, so far as I understand it, to be unscriptural and of dangerous tendency. And the more I examine it, the farther I am from being satisfied with it. And this is the case with the orthodox communi-

ty, to an extent, as I have reason to think, far beyond your apprehension. Compared with the whole body of Congregational and Presbyterian ministers, there are very few who embrace your opinions." Whether these estimates are correct or not, I am confident that Dr. Taylor's peculiarities are adopted far less extensively than he is wont to imagine. Indeed, I have rarely met with a minister, excepting those young men who have been educated in his school, who is willing to express his unqualified approbation of Dr. Taylor's speculations. Many even of those who are apologists for these speculations, and who lend their influence to promote their prevalence, are unwilling to be considered Taylorites, and are very careful to tell you that they do not adopt all Dr. Taylor's opinions. Or if they do not object particularly to the doctrines of the New Haven School, they will tell you they do not like the spirit with which those doctrines are inculcated. I have just seen a letter written a little more than three years ago by a minister of some distinction in New England, who is considered by the New Haven divines as one of their warmest friends and adherents, in which he says: "I am frank to say, that I see some things connected with the theological department in Yale College which I cannot approve. I refer to the *speculative* cast of the system there taught, and to the *great prominence* which is given to some points, which, to say the least, are of very little importance, and are deemed by many to be of bad tendency. I probably see less to fear in their system on the score of heresy than you and some others do. But I see much in the spirit and manner in which

that system is inculcated, which I deeply regret, and which I should heartily rejoice to see any judicious measures adopted to correct."

But a large proportion of the ministers of New England do not adopt any of the peculiar sentiments of the New Haven School. Their views of doctrine accord with those inculcated in the writings of our standard divines; such as Edwards, Bellamy, Dwight, &c. But although the great mass of the New England ministers are sound in the faith, and united in their views of Christian doctrine, and in the rejection of the New Haven errors;—yet they entertain different opinions as to the manner in which these errors should be regarded and treated. There are those, (and the number is not small) who regard them as dangerous—as tending to sap the foundation of the evangelical system. They look upon their prevalence with distress and alarm, and feel it to be their duty to bear their testimony against them. You have already seen from the several extracts which I have given you from Dr. Porter's letters, in what point of light he regarded them. The following statement of a friend, will show what were his feelings near the close of his life.

"I called on Dr. Porter more frequently the last two months of his life, (I believe I may say the last three months,) than usual. There was something in his pale, consumptive face, and in his solemn interesting manner of conversing on the great truths of the gospel, and the errors which seemed coming in on the church, which were very impressive. When on these visits, I have heard him as many, at least, as three differ-



ent times, and I believe *more than three*, express his deep apprehension in regard to the sentiments of Dr. Taylor. Once he said, 'It would take a hundred years to do away the evils brought on the church by his speculations; that Dr. Taylor was taking a fearful responsibility on himself; that Edwards fought a great battle with the Arminians, and gained the victory, but now all was to be gone over again.' "

Dr. Humphrey, in a letter written Nov. 4, 1833, an extract from which was published in the Southern Religious Telegraph, says: "My opinion expressed freely and every where is, that the gentlemen there, (at New Haven) are building their system on philosophy, more than on the Bible; that this philosophy is Arminian, and of course can never support a Calvinistic creed. The tendency of the scheme, I solemnly believe, is to bring in a flood of Arminianism, or rather perhaps, I ought to say Pelagianism upon our churches. Where this tendency will stop, I know not. If not arrested, I fear it may end in fundamental error."

Dr. Woods in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Plummer, dated Feb. 8, 1836, says: "I believe what you say, that there is a perfect understanding among those in every part of our country who are opposed to Calvinism, and that they are acting in concert—that there is an alarming looseness among young preachers; and that there is a fixed determination to maintain a party holding loose opinions—and that there must be a battle fought here and there and every where, (only let it not be fought with carnal weapons.) And I agree with you, that there must be a friendly and

brotherly understanding among all who hold fast the great truths of the gospel, and that the love of the truth must bind them together, though they do not think exactly alike on minor points. I agree, too, that men of influence must lift up their voice, and that we ought to make known what were the views of distinguished men, who have had a high reputation, but who have gone to their rest, such as you mention. The fact is, that Dr. Porter, Mr. Evarts, and Dr. Cornelius, were most deeply alarmed and distressed with the loose speculations which have come from the New Haven School, and from Mr. Finney and others of that stamp. I know how they all felt, and what a full conviction they had that the notions which were peculiar to Dr. Taylor and Mr. Finney, would undermine the fair fabric of our evangelical churches, and spread a system far more unscriptural and pernicious than Wesleyan Methodism." Dr. Griffin, speaking of the New Haven sentiments, says : " I consider the honor of raising to spiritual life, a world dead in trespasses and sins, as one of the brightest glories of the Godhead ; and I have been grieved at my heart to see this honor taken away. This has been the severest cut of all."

Dr. Tyler in his strictures, published in 1829, says : " I cannot but express my conviction, that he, (Dr. Taylor) has taken positions which, when followed into their legitimate consequences, will lead to the subversion of the doctrines of grace." And again : " Nothing but the fullest conviction of the dangerous tendency of these speculations, and the necessity of some counteracting influ-

ence, could have induced the writer to appear in this manner before the public."

Mr. Nettleton, in a communication written by him in Feb. 1834, after having read an article in the *Christian Spectator*, entitled, "What is the real difference between the New Haven divines and those who oppose them?" shows that the positions laid down in that article tend to subvert the scriptural doctrine of regeneration, and observes: "On the whole, their views of depravity, of regeneration, and of the mode of preaching to sinners, I think, cannot fail of doing very great mischief. This exhibition overlooks the most alarming features of human depravity, and the very essence of experimental religion. It is directly calculated to prevent sinners from coming under conviction of sin, and to make them think well of themselves while in an unregenerated state. It flatters others with the delusion, that they may give their hearts to God, or that they have already done it, while their propensity to sin remains in all its strength." "I know that converts may be made by hundreds and by thousands on these principles with perfect ease, for so it has been in former times among different sects in New England, as I have had full opportunity to know. But piety never did and never will descend far in the line of these sentiments. Were I to preach the sentiments contained in that article, I do solemnly believe that I should be the means of healing the hurt of awakened sinners slightly, and be guilty of crying peace, peace, when there is no peace, and of throwing the whole weight of my ministerial influence on the side of human rebellion against God."

These extracts will give you a specimen of the views and feelings which are entertained by a large number of the ministers of New England. Such, however, are not the feelings of all who do not adopt the peculiarities of the New Haven School. There are some who, through love of peace and dread of controversy, persuade themselves that the best way to remedy the evil is to let it alone. Others, not having read much of the discussions which have been published, and of course having only a vague and indefinite knowledge of the points in controversy, flatter themselves that the difference is not so great as many have supposed—while others, after having read some of Dr. Taylor's writings, and found themselves unable to understand them, have come to the conclusion that nobody can understand him, and that all the difficulty originates in a misunderstanding. On this point I would just observe, that if Dr. Taylor cannot write so that the most distinguished theologians in the land, such men as Dr. Porter, Dr. Woods, Dr. Griffin, Dr. Humphrey, the Princeton Professors, &c. can understand him, what kind of a teacher of theology must he be? Or to adopt the language of Dr. Porter to Dr. Beecher, "If he cannot make clear heads combined with honest hearts, comprehend his meaning, what sort of a system must his be to enlighten and save the world?"

Still, however, the New Haven sentiments do prevail to a considerable extent. Those who have been zealously engaged in propagating them, have enjoyed many advantages for the prosecution of their plans, and they have not labored without some success.

And what, you will ask, have been the practical results, so far as they have been developed? The answer to this inquiry, in the opinion of many, at least, is well expressed by a distinguished and excellent minister in Connecticut, in a letter written Oct. 1, 1833. He says: "The New Haven theology lowers, and lowers exceedingly the standard of our doctrines, of our revivals, and of real piety in and out of the State. It turns every good thing downward, and gives a strong descending impetus." Where these sentiments prevail, the great doctrines of the gospel are not preached as they formerly were. Lax views of doctrine are creeping into the churches, and the character of revivals is evidently deteriorating. The religious excitements which have taken place where the new divinity is preached, differ widely from the revivals which took place eighteen, twenty, and twenty-five years ago. Those revivals were remarkably pure, as time has abundantly shown. They were characterized by deep and awful solemnity, by powerful convictions of sin, and by a remarkable exhibition of the fruits of the Spirit. The converts were meek, humble, docile, and but few apostacies occurred among them. But many of the religious excitements of the present day are very transient, and although a great number of conversions is sometimes reported, yet it not unfrequently happens that, within a short period, very few of them are to be found. Many melancholy facts might be given on this subject. I will mention one or two. A year or two since, I was conversing with a pious layman who resides in a town where, eighteen months before, there had been said to

be a very powerful and extensive revival. I enquired of him the state of religion. He said it was very low. But I understand you had a very remarkable revival of religion in your town winter before last. "Yes," said he, "but converts do not seem to wear as they did formerly." Have not the subjects of that revival worn well? "Not at all," he replied. Great numbers, I understood, were supposed to be converted, how many of them have been added to the church? "Not more than six or seven, and some of those do not adorn their profession."

In another town there was a religious excitement in 1833, where about forty youth were supposed to be converted. One year afterwards, I was informed that not one of them had made a profession of religion, or at that time gave any decisive evidence of piety. These are specimens of many facts which have occurred within a few years past in New England; and not only where those wandering stars, Mr. Foote and Mr. Burchard, have been, but under the ministrations of settled pastors. It was not so under the labors of brother Nettleton; nor under the labors of those New England pastors, through whose instrumentality such accessions were made to the churches at the commencement of the present century.

I am yours, very affectionately.



## LETTER XII.

March 21, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

As great pains have been taken to make the impression that the New Haven divinity is New England divinity, and in this way to awaken jealousy and prejudice in the Presbyterian Church against the ministers and churches of New England generally, I have thought it might be useful to devote a few letters to the object of correcting this impression. I have already remarked that the great body of New England ministers accord in sentiment with our standard theological writers, such as Edwards, Bellamy, Hopkins, Dwight, Smalley, Strong, &c. What I now propose to show is, that the New Haven divines have departed from the views maintained by these writers. Before I proceed however, to adduce direct proof of this allegation, I will just glance at the opinions which are entertained of their speculations by different classes of the community. Their writings have been extensively read, not only by Calvinists, but by professed Arminians and Unitarians. And how are they regarded by

these different classes of individuals? Are they regarded as according with the writings of those who have heretofore been considered as Calvinists? What is the opinion of those who are denominated Old School divines in the Presbyterian church? Is there an individual in this numerous class of ministers, who does not regard the New Haven divines as having departed widely from the Calvinistic system? What is the opinion of such men as Dr. Richards, Dr. Spring, Dr. Woodbridge, Dr. Fisher, Dr. Hilyer, and many others in the Presbyterian Church, who, as Dr. Miller says, "still possess no small share of New England feelings?" Do they regard the New Haven divines as consistent Calvinists? On the contrary, do they not think as unfavorably of their speculations as any in your church? And how are these speculations regarded by the most distinguished theologians of New England? What were the views entertained of them by those venerable servants of God now at rest, Dr. Hyde, Dr. Porter, Mr. Evarts, and Dr. Cornelius? Dr. Hyde, in a letter dated April 13, 1830, said, "I notice with much trembling the progress of error in this land, and among the churches of New England. The New Haven scheme of theology is a broad step-stone to Arminianism. You may possibly live to have your attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ put to a severe test. The doctrines of sovereign grace are more and more discarded." What were the views and feelings of Dr. Porter, Mr. Evarts and Dr. Cornelius, is sufficiently apparent from extracts inserted in my previous letters. And what are the opinions of such living men as Dr. Grif-

fin, Dr. Church, Dr. Woods, Dr. Humphrey, &c. "My opinion," says Dr. Humphrey, "expressed freely, and everywhere, is, that the gentlemen there, (at New Haven) are building their system on philosophy more than on the Bible; that this philosophy is Arminian, and can never support a Calvinistic creed. My solemn belief is, that the tendency of the scheme is to bring in a flood of Arminianism, or rather, perhaps I ought to say Pelagianism upon our churches." Dr. Humphrey has here expressed the 'opinion' and solemn belief of very many of the most discriminating and judicious ministers of New England. And what do professed Arminians think of these speculations? The Rev. Dr. Fiske, President of the Wesleyan University, in his reply to Professor Fitch's Review of his sermon on Predestination, says, "If I understand the reviewer, he is in principle an Arminian. The reviewer's whole ground of defence is solely this Arminian explanation of the doctrine of predestination. He acknowledges, nay, boldly asserts, in a strain of rugged controversy with his brethren who may differ from this view of the subject, that there is no other explanation by which the arguments of the sermon can be avoided; that is, as I understand it, the only way to avoid the arguments against the doctrine of Calvinian predestination, is to give it up and assume the Arminian sentiment. I cannot approve of the reviewer's use of terms, though to my understanding he has evidently given the doctrine of predestination not merely a new dress, but a new character, yet he more than intimates that it is the old doctrine, with only a new method of explanation. And

so confident is the reviewer, that he still believes in the fact of predestination in the old Calvinistic sense, that in stating his sentiments on this subject, he uses the same forms of expression which Calvinists have used when their meaning was as distant from his as the two poles from each other. I feel safer in understanding the reviewer in an Arminian sense, because he and some others take it very ill of me that I have represented them as Calvinists. By God's foreordaining whatever comes to pass, he only means that God foresaw that sin would certainly take place, and predetermined that he would not hinder it, either by refraining from creating moral agents, or by throwing a restraint upon them that would destroy their free agency; in short, that he would submit to it as an evil unavoidably incident to the best possible system, after doing all that he wisely could do to prevent it. This is foreordaining sin! that is, predetermining that it should be! I cannot but express my deepest regret that a gentleman of the reviewer's standing and learning should lend his aid, and give his sanction to such a perversion of language, to such a confusion of tongues. Do the words predestinate, foreordain, decree, mean in common language, or in their radical and critical definition, nothing more than to permit, not absolutely to hinder—to submit to as an unavoidable but offensive evil? The reviewer certainly will not pretend to this. The use of these terms by those who believe as I understand the reviewer to believe, is the more unjustifiable, because they are used by most Calvinistic authors in a different sense. Why then should the reviewer,

believing as he does, continue to use them in the symbols of his faith? Different persons might give different answers to such a question. For one, I would prefer he should answer it himself. His mode of explanation turns the doctrine into Arminianism. But the sermon was never written to oppose those who hold the decrees of God in an Arminian sense. Why then, does the reviewer complain of the sermon? It seems that Calvinism, in its proper character is as obnoxious to the reviewer as to the author of the sermon. If it is *safer* to attack Calvinism in this indirect way, I will not object. But I cannot see that it would be safer. An open, bold front, always ends best. As I understand the reviewer, from the days of John Calvin down to the present hour, there is, on this point, between the great body of Calvinists and himself, almost no likeness except in the use of words. Theirs is one doctrine, his another. Why then, does he hail from that party, and hoist their signals, and then, after seeming to get the victory by espousing the very cause of the assailed, encourage the Calvinists to triumph, as if their cause had been successful?"

Dr. Griffin, after quoting the foregoing passages in his treatise on divine efficiency, makes the following observation: "These remarks of the President of the Wesleyan University of Connecticut, appear to me to be candid and judicious, and go far towards exposing the unhappy incongruity between the language and sentiments of this Review."

And what opinion do the Unitarians entertain of the New Haven speculations? If I had at

command. a file of the *Christian Register*, (a Unitarian paper printed in Boston,) for the last six or seven years, I could turn to numerous passages in which they have exulted in the progress of liberal sentiments at New Haven. They have often quoted with high commendation the writings of Dr. Taylor, and have affirmed again and again, that the New Haven divines have given up the most objectionable parts of the Calvinistic system. The following passages are from the "Last Thoughts" of Noah Worcester, a Unitarian clergyman in Massachusetts. The book was published in 1833.

"In former days, the Calvinistic creed of human depravity affirmed the corruption of man's *whole* nature, as the consequence of Adam's sin."

This theory was modified in some important respects by the Hopkinsians of New England, by whose theory the corruption was limited to the heart or will of man, leaving the mental faculties unimpaired. Still, it was admitted that the posterity of Adam are born with a nature or disposition wholly sinful. A still further modification has been advanced and ably supported by Dr. Taylor of New Haven and his associates. To state the hypothesis in authorized language, I shall take my extracts from a "Review of Taylor and Harvey," which appeared in the *Christian Spectator*, for June, 1829. After quoting two paragraphs, he proceeds, "In the first paragraph I see nothing objectionable; and I rejoice that such views of human nature have been proposed and are acquiring belief. If I have not misunderstood these writers, the New Haven theory asserts that sin is a voluntary transgression of



a known law, and that as infants are incapable of moral agency, they are incapable of sin; and that there is no such thing as sinful nature, antecedent to sinful volition, or moral action. They strongly assert that nature is not sinful. Thus far I acquiesce." "Within a few years Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, with his associates, including the *Christian Spectator*, have done much to diminish the reputation of what has been regarded as the Orthodox and Calvinistic views on this subject." (original sin.)

In regard to the divine permission of sin, the writer adopts the views of the New Haven divines, and speaks in terms of high commendation of their reasoning on this subject. He says, "The New Haven writers have contended for the hypothesis that sin is an evil incident to the best plan of government."

Now here is a problem to be solved. If the New Haven divines are consistent Calvinists, and if they do agree substantially with the standard orthodox writers of New England, how has it come to pass that they have been so egregiously misunderstood? And not by a few individuals merely, but by vast multitudes; not only by persons of one particular class, embracing similar sentiments, but by persons of different classes, and embracing widely different sentiments?

Besides, if there is no difference, or no material difference between them and the orthodox generally, what are we to understand by the great improvements which they are said to have made in theological science? That they have made such improvements is not only a matter of constant exultation by their friends and adherents,

but is more than intimated by themselves. In the *Christian Spectator* for September, 1833, they say, "But greatly as our views on this subject, (the influences of the Spirit,) and some others, have been misrepresented, we are happy to find that they are beginning to be extensively understood and appreciated. We know of very few, who are now inclined to ask, 'can there be no other sin than that which consists in voluntary transgression of known law?'—and the number is far less than formerly of those who hold that regeneration is so exclusively the work of the Spirit that the subject of it has, and can have no voluntary agency in it. There has of late been a great improvement in the doctrinal views of vast numbers, in relation to these and a few other points which we esteem of high importance. And if the humble labors of the *Christian Spectator* have, in any degree, contributed to this desirable result, 'we therein rejoice, yea and will rejoice.' "

It is worthy of remark, that they here speak of the points respecting which they and their brethren differ, and in regard to which they suppose "a great improvement" has been made; not as matters of little consequence, but as points of "high importance."

There has been a very great inconsistency in the advocates of the new divinity in relation to this matter. Sometimes they give us startling and even shocking representations of the tendency of the views commonly entertained by the orthodox. They speak of them as tending to "the very worst of heresies," and involving the most horrid blasphemies. At other times, they

insist that they and their opponents are substantially agreed—that all the difference relates to minor parts, and philosophical theories, which do not affect the fundamentals of Christianity. Much indeed has been said about the philosophy of religion, and great stress has been laid on the distinction between the doctrines of religion and the philosophy of the doctrines. It is said that persons may agree in their belief of the doctrines or great facts of Christianity, and still differ in their philosophy. Where this is the case, it is contended that the difference cannot be fundamental or of great importance.

If I understand those who make this distinction, they mean by the philosophy of the doctrines, the mode of explaining the doctrines. The principle then contended for is this. Those who agree in admitting the doctrines or facts of the Bible are substantially agreed, although they may differ widely in their mode of explaining those facts.

Let us test this principle. The apostle says, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” And this fact is admitted to be true by persons who entertain widely different opinions of the plan of salvation. One maintains that Christ came to save men by teaching them the will of God, and setting an example for them to imitate. Another, that he came to suffer and die an atoning sacrifice, and in this way to honor the law, and render it consistent for God to pardon those who repent and believe. Another, that he came to secure, and actually

will secure the salvation of all men. Are all these individuals substantially agreed?

Again. Our Saviour said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." But one man who admits the doctrine of the new birth to be true, explains it to mean water baptism. Another, conversion from the Jewish or Gentile religion to the belief and profession of Christianity. Another, a gradual change of character. Another, a mere change of purpose. And another, a radical change of heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. Are all these individuals substantially agreed?

Again. The scriptures teach the doctrine of justification by faith. But one man understands by faith a mere speculative belief of the truth. Another, that Christ died for him in particular. Another, a cordial reception of the truth as it is in Jesus. Are all these individuals substantially agreed?

This illustration might be pursued to any extent. But enough has been said to show the fallacy of the principle in question, and to show, moreover that if admitted to be true, it will sweep away all distinction between true and false religion. According to this distinction, all the difference between Calvinists, Pelagians, Arminians, and Unitarians, and even Universalists, respects only the philosophy of religion. They all admit the facts stated in the Bible, but they differ in their explanation of these facts. And is the principle to be maintained, that if different individuals express their belief in the same terms, it is no matter how much they may differ in their explanation of those terms? Does a man's faith

depend on the language in which it is expressed, or in the sense in which he uses that language?

Dr. Porter, in a letter written August 6, 1832, says, "On the late hobby distinction between doctrines and the theory or philosophy of religion, I could write a sheet or two. I said to brother Beecher, give me that door, and I will bring all the churches of Boston to meet on one floor, as orthodox. Try the principle on the trinity, and all that is essential to the truth is easily set aside under the head of philosophy, or theory. Worse yet as to the atonement, regeneration, &c. Noah Worcester, in the *Christian Register*, three or four weeks ago, followed up the principle capitally in behalf of the Unitarians."

Much reproach has been cast upon the orthodox for disparaging philosophy in matters of religion. But it is not true that they disparage it when kept within its proper limits, and directed to its proper ends. That to which they object is setting up reason above revelation, forming philosophical theories, independently of revelation, respecting the powers and susceptibilities of man, the principles of moral agency and moral government, and then explaining the Bible so as to make it conform to their theories. This is, and ever has been, the fruitful source of error in religion. True philosophy bows with humble reverence to the decisions of revelation. She is modest in her pretensions, and like Mary, sits at the Saviour's feet, that she may learn of him who is meek and lowly in heart.

Yours affectionately.

## LETTER XIII.

March 21, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Dr. Porter, in one of his letters written in 1830, says, "I am completely non-plussed to see what Dr. Taylor would be at. He began writing avowedly to correct what he thought common errors of our theologians; and next he supports his own views by quoting these theologians as concurring in sentiment with himself." This inconsistency of the New Haven divines has often been noticed, and remarked upon with astonishment. Notwithstanding the claims set up by themselves, and their adherents to the merits of having made "great improvements" in the science of theology; yet when they are charged with having departed from the established orthodoxy of New England, they repel this charge by insisting that they do not differ from Edwards, Bellamy, Dwight, Strong, &c. and that, too, on the very points respecting which they profess to have made such "great improvement."

Without dwelling on this inconsistency, I pro-



pose to show, by a few brief quotations, how utterly groundless is this claim.

The first topic to which I would direct your attention is the government of God.

On this point, the New Haven divines have maintained the following positions, viz: "That God has not a complete control over the moral universe. That moral agents can do wrong under every possible influence to prevent it. That God prefers, all things considered, that all his creatures should be holy and happy, and that he does all in his power to render them so. That the existence of sin is not, on the whole, for the best. That sin exists, because God cannot prevent it in a moral system. And that the blessedness of God is actually impaired by the disobedience of his creatures."

These positions are clearly maintained in the following passages, and many others that might be cited.

"God not only prefers, on the whole, that his creatures should forever perform their duties, rather than neglect them, but proposes on his part to do all in his power to promote this very object in his kingdom.—*Christian Spectator*, 1832, p. 669.

"It will not be denied, that free moral agents can do wrong under every possible influence to prevent it. The possibility of a contradiction, in supposing them to be prevented from doing wrong is, therefore, demonstrably certain. Free moral agents can do wrong under all possible preventing influence."—*Ch. Spec.* 1830, p. 563.

"But this possibility that moral agents will sin, remains (suppose what else you will) so long

as moral agency remains; and how can it be proved that a thing will not be, when for aught that appears it may be? When, in view of all the facts and evidence in the case, it remains true that it may be, what evidence or proof can exist that it will not be?—*Ch. Spec.* 1830, p. 553.

“We know that a moral system necessarily implies the existence of free agents, with the power to act in despite of all opposing power. This fact sets human reason at defiance, in every attempt to prove that some of these agents will not use that power and actually sin.”—*Ch. Spec.* 1831, p. 617.

“It is groundless assumption that God could have prevented all sin, or at least, the present degree of sin in a moral system. If holiness in a moral system be preferable to sin in its stead, why did not a benevolent God, were it possible to him, prevent all sin, and secure the prevalence of universal holiness? Would not a moral universe of perfect holiness, and of course perfect happiness, be happier and better than one comprising sin and its miseries? And must not infinite benevolence accomplish all the good it can? Would not a benevolent God, then, had it been possible to him in the nature of things, have secured the existence of universal holiness in his moral kingdom.”—*Dr. Taylor's Concio*, p. 28.

Now I am bold to affirm that these positions have never been maintained by any of the orthodox writers of New England, nor by any divines claiming to be Calvinistic, since the Reformation. The universal sentiment of New England Cal-

vinists, in relation to this subject, may be learned from the following extracts :

PRESIDENT EDWARDS. "Objectors may say, God cannot always prevent men's sins, unless he act contrary to the free nature of the subject, or without destroying men's liberty. But will they deny that an omnipotent and infinitely wise God could possibly invent and set before men such strong motives to be obedient, and have kept before them in such a manner, as should have influenced all mankind to continue in their obedience, as the elect engels have done, without destroying their liberty?"—*Decrees and Election*, Sec. 19.

"Sin may be an evil thing, and yet that there should be such a disposal and permission that it should come to pass may be a good thing.—*Treatise on the Will*, p. 339.

"God does not will sin as sin, or for the sake of any evil; though it be his pleasure so to order things, that He permitting, sin will come to pass; for the sake of the great good that by his disposal shall be the consequence."—*Id.* p. 314.

DR. BELLAMY. "Others, to solve the difficulties, have asserted that it was not in the power of God to prevent the fall of free agents, without destroying their free agency, and turning them into intelligent machines, incapable of virtue as well as of vice. But it is enough for us, to confute this hypothesis, that it is contrary to plain scripture representations, which teach us that the man, Christ Jesus, our second Adam, was a free agent, capable of the highest virtue, and yet in a confirmed state, so that he could not sin; as are also the saints and angels now

in heaven. From whence, it appears that it was in God's power to have confirmed all intelligences at first; and left them moral agents notwithstanding."—*Works, Vol. I. p. 59.*

"We agree, that if God had pleased, he could have hindered the existence of sin, and caused misery to be forever unknown in his dominions, with as much ease as to have suffered things to take their present course."—*Id. p. 126.*

In the following passages, he quotes from his antagonist, and answers the very objection which the New Haven divines have so often urged on this subject. The objector says: "For if once I should believe that it was wisest and best in God to permit sin, most for his glory and the good of his system, I should feel myself under a necessity to look upon sin as being, in its own nature, a good thing, for the glory of God and the good of the system; and that God delights in it as such. And that, therefore, instead of hating sin, mourning for it in ourselves, lamenting it in others, we ought rather to esteem it as really a good and virtuous thing, and as such, to rejoice in it, and even to keep an everlasting jubilee in remembrance of satan's revolt, and Adam's fall; events so infinitely glorious! Absurdities so shocking that I never can believe them." To this, Dr. Bellamy replies: "And absurdities, let me tell you, if you did but understand the scheme you are opposing, you would know are, so far from following from it, that they are absolutely inconsistent with it. For the doctrine of the wisdom of God, in the permission of sin, supposes sin in itself, and in all its natural tendencies, to be infinitely evil, infinitely contrary to the

honor of God and good of the system. For herein consists the wisdom of God in the affair, not in bringing good out of good, but in bringing infinite good out of infinite evil, and never suffering one sin to happen in all his dominions, but which, notwithstanding its infinitely evil nature and tendency, infinite wisdom can and will overrule to great good, on the whole.”—*Id.* p. 145.

“Now, since it is a plain fact, that sin and misery do take place in the system, methinks that every one who is a friend to God and the system, should rejoice with all his heart to hear, that the seed of the woman will bruise the serpent’s head, bring glory to God, and good to the system, out of all the evil that ever has taken place, or ever will; (and the more good the better;) and so completely disappoint the devil.”—*Id.* p. 171.

DR. HOPKINS. “Moral evil is, in its own nature and tendency, most odious, hurtful, and undesirable; but in the hands of Omnipotence, infinite wisdom, and goodness, it may be introduced into the most perfect plan and system, and so disposed and counteracted in its nature and tendency, as to be a necessary part of it, in order to render it most complete and desirable.”—*System.* Vol. 1. p. 114.

DR. DWIGHT. “That God could not prevent the existence of sin, cannot be maintained. He has prevented it in the angels who kept their first estate. He prevented it in the person of Christ, who, in his human nature knew no sin. He has promised that he will prevent it, and he will therefore prevent it in the spirits of just men

made perfect in the heavens. Should it be said, that these beings, by their own voluntary agency, and without any interference or influence on the part of God, continue in a state of holiness; this supposition affects not the point at all; for God plainly could have created every moral agent with exactly the same attributes, and placed him in exactly the same circumstances, with those several beings who persist in holiness. Whatever we suppose to be the means by which they are preserved from sin, those very means he certainly could have used, to prevent, in the same effectual manner, all others."—*System of Theology* Vol. 1. pp. 244, 245.

"It will not be denied, that God is both able and disposed to plan a perfect system of good. It follows, therefore, that he certainly has planned such a system. What accords not with his pleasure, upon the whole, accords not with this system; this being the thing which is agreeable to his pleasure; but must be defective or superfluous, out of place or out of time, aside from, or contrary to the perfection of the system. Consequently, if the actions of voluntary beings be not, upon the whole, accordant with the pleasure of God, he was not only unassured of the accomplishment of the end, which he proposed in creating and governing the universe; but he entered upon this great work without knowing that it would be accomplished; and was originally certain that the perfect good which he proposed, would never exist.—*Id.* p. 239.

DR. STRONG. "Human incapacity to bring the greatest good out of much evil—much sin, and much misery, is no argument that an infinite



God cannot do it.”—*Benevolence and Miscry*, p. 15.

“We ought to have such confidence in the wisdom and goodness of God, when he tells us that creatures shall be always miserable under punishment, as to believe, that the eternal happiness of every creature, and the greatest happiness of the whole, are incompatible, and cannot come together into that plan or scheme of existence and government, which are the best possible.—*Id.* p. 129.

CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR. “Now it is possible that many things, which in themselves are right, would not be for the best, on the whole; and on the other hand, that many things are, on the whole, for the best, which in themselves are wrong. I say this is possible—nay, it is certain. The wars and bloodshed, the despotism and bondage, the subtlety and dishonesty, the folly and sin which overspread the earth, though in themselves wrong, are, on the whole, for the best.”—*Vol.* 1. p. 447.

Such were the views inculcated by the Christian Spectator in 1819. How different from the views inculcated in the same work in 1832.

MR. DAY. (Father of President Day of Yale College, a distinguished New England divine.) I have before me a sermon of his preached at Bethlehem in 1774, before the Association of Ministers of Litchfield county, and published at their request. The object of this sermon was to refute the very hypothesis which has, of late, been revived and strenuously maintained by the New Haven divines. The title of the sermon is “The ability of God to restrain sin, in a way con-

sistent with the liberty of the creature." The following extracts will show not only what were his views, but what were the views of the Association, and of Calvinistic ministers generally, in New England at that period.

"Is not the parent of the universe kind and benevolent? Can he overrule all things for the best, and will he not? Can he restrain the wrath of man, and will he not therefore do it, whenever it would praise him? Reason and scripture join to demonstrate that he will. If God does, therefore, in every instance, restrain sin, so far as it would be for the best, it is certain that whatever moral evil is in the universe, it shall somehow or other subserve the noblest and best purposes."—*Preface*, p. 4.

"What I propose in the ensuing discourse is, to establish God's *absolute dominion* over the hearts of men; to evince his entire ability to govern and control the human heart, so, that to whatever enormous height, the turbulent passions and violent corruptions may arise, yet they are perfectly limited and curbed at the divine pleasure; so that it may without propriety be said with respect thereto, as is said concerning the boisterous ocean—"Hitherto shall thou come, but no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." It would be a lamentable consideration, indeed, if the horrid outrage and madness of men was irresistible by Omnipotence itself; and if the all-wise Governor and Superintendent of the universe, could not restrain and suppress the perverse rage of men, agreeably to his holy will,—p. 5.

"If it is not in the power of God to keep a

free agent from sinning, with what propriety can he be directed to pray to God for restraining grace, or that he may be preserved from sin?"—p. 14.

"If we suppose the consequence of God's creating and upholding free agents, would be, that they might act entirely inconsistently with the divine purpose; that in the use of their freedom, God could not keep them in those bounds, which should eventually turn most for his glory, and the greatest good of intelligent beings; but in direct opposition to the purpose of God, they should act in such a manner, as to entirely overthrow and subvert all the good which God proposed in the creation of intelligent beings, how shocking must the thought be! Upon this supposition, all the noble and excellent ends which God proposed in the creation of the universe, might be frustrated; for it not being in the power of God to restrain sin, and govern free agents according to his will, they might in every respect cross the will of God, and defeat every valuable end the divine Being proposed in their formation." "It is very easy to perceive, that if it is not in the power of God to control the hearts of free agents, and restrain them from sin, according to his pleasure, dreadful consequences may ensue. The will of God may be crossed—the good he aimed at in the creation be prevented—irreparable disorders introduced. The friends of virtue would be filled with lamentation. The enemies of God and all good, would triumph and exult. Is it not easy to see that this might have been the terrible consequence, if it was not

absolutely in the power of God to govern free agents?"—pp. 24, 25.

"We infer, that as God is able to restrain sin among the apostate, rebellious, children of men, who are under the dominion of powerful vicious habits; so we can much more easily conceive, that he was able to have prevented sin in beings made originally holy."—p. 27.

The theory of the New Haven divines, in relation to this subject, is the very theory which has uniformly been maintained by Arminians in their controversies with Calvinists. The grand objection of Arminians to the Calvinistic doctrine of the Divine Decrees, has been, that it involves the position that God purposed or decreed the existence of sin; and when they have been asked, why God did not prevent the existence of sin, unless it was, on the whole, his purpose that it should exist? their reply has been invariably, in substance, as follows; God could not have prevented sin without destroying the moral agency of his creatures; in other words, he could not have prevented all sin in a moral system. Thus Mr. Fletcher, the distinguished advocate of the Wesleyan system, represents the Divine Being as saying, "I foresaw, indeed, that by such a final contempt of my grace, many would bring destruction upon themselves; but having wisely decreed to make a world of probationers and free agents, I could not necessarily incline their will to obedience without robbing them of free agency, without foolishly defeating the counsel of my own will, and absurdly spoiling the work of my own hands." Thus also, the author of the "Errors of Hopkinsianism," (an avowed Ar-

minian,) says, "No doubt but God sought the greatest good of the universe, consistently with his own nature, and the nature of man; and consistently with these natures, the greatest good is obtained, because man refuses to have more. A part of the human race choose death in the error of their ways; and to have made man a necessary agent, would have been to make him any thing besides an intelligent creature.

The principle assumed by both of these writers, (and the same is true of Arminians generally,) is, that God could not have prevented the existence of sin, without robbing man of free agency, and making him a necessary agent. The same ground is taken by the New Haven divines.

Should it be said, that those who maintain that God foreordained the existence of a moral system with the foreknowledge that sin would be necessarily incidental to it, do virtually maintain that he decreed the existence of sin—I reply: 'This view of the divine decrees, Arminians have always been ready to admit; but they have not understood this to be the Calvinistic doctrine, nor has it been so understood by Calvinists themselves. The doctrine which Calvinists have maintained is, that the present system, is the best conceivable system—that it is the very system which God preferred to all others—and that notwithstanding the sin and misery which it includes, it will result in a higher display of the divine glory, than any other system of which the infinite mind could conceive. They have never supposed that God was unable to secure universal holiness in his moral kingdom; but have uniformly main-

tained that he permitted sin to exist, because he saw that he could so overrule it, and counteract its tendencies, as to render it conducive to the highest good of the universe. They believe that he can bring good out of evil, and light out of darkness; and that he will make the wrath of man to praise him, and restrain the remainder. They believe that his character is perfect—that his plan is perfect—that his work is perfect, and that nothing will ever be permitted to exist, which was not included in his eternal purpose, and which will not be rendered subservient to his great and glorious designs.

Yours affectionately.



## LETTER XIV.

March 23, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

In my last letter, I attempted to show the wide difference between the views of the New Haven divines and those of the standard orthodox writers of New England, in relation to the government of God over the moral universe. The difference is no less palpable in regard to Original Sin and Native Depravity.

The New Haven divines maintain that mankind come into the world with the same nature in kind as that with which Adam was created—that there is no natural or constitutional propensity to sin; no hereditary corruption of nature which is transmitted from parent to child, and by consequence, that Adam was not the federal head and representative of his posterity. They maintain that infants sustain the same relation to the moral government of God as brute animals; that they are in no sense sinners, and that death, in their case, is not on account of sin. To be consistent, they must, of course, maintain that they do not need redemption or regeneration.

In proof of this statement, I refer to the following passages, out of many that might be quoted :

“But Mr. Harvey may retort the question upon us, and ask, whence, upon our principles, does man derive his *moral nature*? We answer, without hesitation, from the hand of God who made him.” “Every soul, as it enters on existence, is a production of creative power. He who forms it, gives it from the first that nature or constitution which prepares it for action when placed in the appropriate circumstances of its being. And as well might we affirm that it is the nature of a stone to fall, and yet that God is not the author of gravitation, as that nature is itself sinful, and yet that God is not the author of sin.” “If Mr. Harvey chooses to maintain that minds are propagated, and that sin is transmitted in *generation*, it will only remove the difficulty one step further back. For, we ask, who established the laws of propagation? Can a being come into existence of which God is not the author? Every soul, then, which becomes united to a human body, has either existed from eternity, or has been brought into existence by God, and every thing pertaining to such a soul which is not its ‘own act,’ must of necessity result from the act of the Creator.”—*Christian Spectator* for 1829, pp. 348, 349.

“Infants die. The answer has been given a thousand times, brutes die also. But Mr. Harvey replies, ‘animals are not subjects of the moral government of God.’ Neither are infants previous to moral agency; for what has moral government to do with those who are not moral

agents? Animals and infants, previous to moral agency, do therefore, stand on precisely the same ground in reference to this subject. Suffering and death afford no more evidence of sin in one case than in the other.—*Id.* p. 373.

“Did not vehement desire produce sin in Adam’s first act of transgression? Was there any previous principle of depravity in him? Why then may not strong constitutional desires be followed *now* by a choice of their objects, as well as in the case of Adam?”—*Id.* p. 366.

“If no being can sin, without a constitutional propensity to sin, how came Adam to sin? If one being, as Adam, can sin, and did in fact sin, without such a propensity, why may not others?”—*Spirit of the Pilgrims, Vol. vi.* p. 13.

“Mankind come into the world with the same nature in *kind* as that with which Adam was created.”—*Id.* p. 5.

“What influence has the fall exerted on the posterity of Adam? I answer, that it may have been to change their nature, not in kind, but in degree.”—*Id.* p. 12.

Compare the foregoing with the following extracts :

PRESIDENT EDWARDS. “By original sin, as the phrase has been most commonly used by divines, is meant innate, sinful depravity of the heart. But yet, when the doctrine of original sin is spoken of, it is vulgarly understood in that latitude, as to include not only the depravity of nature, but the imputation of Adam’s first sin, or in other words, the liableness or exposedness of Adam’s posterity, in the divine judgment to par-

take of the punishment of that sin.”—*Treatise on Original Sin*, pp. 1, 2.

“The natural state of the mind of man is attended with a propensity of nature, which is prevalent and effectual to such an issue; and, therefore their nature is corrupt and depraved with a moral depravity that amounts to and implies their utter undoing.—*Id.* p. 9.

“We have the same evidence that the propensity in this case lies in the nature of the subject, and don’t arise from any particular circumstances, as we have in any case whatsoever; which is only by the effects appearing to be the same in all changes of time and place, and under all variations of circumstances.—*Id.* p. 23.

“That propensity which has been proved to be in the nature of all mankind must be a very evil, depraved, and pernicious propensity; making it manifest that the soul of man, as it is by nature, is in a corrupt, fallen, and ruined state.”—*Id.* p. 27.

“In this place, (Job, xv. 14,) we are not only told how wicked man’s heart is, but also, how men come by such wickedness; even by being of the race of mankind, by ordinary generation. ’Tis most plain that man being born of a woman is the reason of his not being clean.” “And without doubt, David has respect to this same way of derivation, when he says, (Psalm lvii: 5,) ‘Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.’ ”—*Id.* pp. 191, 195.

But it is needless to quote from Edwards. Any one who will read attentively his *Treatise on Original Sin*, will perceive that it is irreconcil-

leably at variance with the system of the New Haven divines.

DR. BELLAMY. "Adam was created in the image of God; it was co-natural to him to love God with all his heart, and this would have been our case had he not rebelled against God; but now we are born devoid of the divine image, have no heart for God, are transgressors from the womb, by nature children of wrath." "We are born into the world, not only destitute of a conformity to the law, but we are natively, diametrically opposed to it in the temper of our hearts." "If any should inquire, 'But can it be right that Adam's sin should have any influence upon us?' I answer, it is a plain case that it actually has, and we may depend upon it that the judge of all the earth does right. And besides, why may not God make Adam our public head and representative, to act in our room, as he has since, for our recovery, made his own son our public head and representative." "If he had kept the covenant of his God, and secured happiness to all his race, should we not forever have blessed God for so good a constitution?" "And if we should thus have approved this constitution, had Adam never sinned, why might we not as justly approve it now, if we would be but disinterestedly partial?"—*Bellamy's works, Vol. 1, pp. 201, 221.*

DR. HOPKINS. "By the constitution and covenant with Adam, his first disobedience was the disobedience of all mankind. That is, the sin and consequent ruin of all the human race was, by this constitution, infallibly connected with the first sin of the head and father of the race. By

the divine constitution, the appointment of God, if the head and father of mankind sinned, the whole race of men, all his posterity should sin, and in this sense, it would be the sin of the whole. Accordingly, when the head became a sinner, and moral corruption took possession of the heart, a sure foundation was laid by the constitution under which man was, for the same sin and moral corruption to take place, and spread through all the human race; just as by a divine appointment, or law of nature, the sap of the root or original stock of a tree, passes into the numerous limbs, twigs, and fruit of the tree, as they successively grow out of it."—(See the connexion.)—*Hopkin's System*, Vol. 1, p. 250.

DR. DWIGHT. The thirty-second sermon in his system of theology is entitled, "Human depravity derived from Adam." In this sermon, commenting on Romans v. 12, 19, he says, "The meaning of these passages is, I think, plainly the following: that by means of the offence or transgression of Adam, the judgment or sentence of God came upon all men unto condemnation, because, and solely because, all men in that state of things which was constituted in consequence of the transgression of Adam, became sinners." He says also, "It cannot, I think, be questioned, that Moses intended to inform us that Seth was begotten in the moral likeness of Adam after his apostacy, and sustained from his birth a moral character similar to that which his two brothers, Cain and Abel, also sustained. This view of the subject appears plainly to have been adopted by Job, when he asks, 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.' (Job xiv. 4.)



By Bildad, when he asks, 'how then can man be justified with God, or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?' (xxv. 4.) By David, when he says, (Psalm, li. 5.) 'behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' And by Paul, when he says, 'as we have borne the image of the earthy, (Adam) so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (Adam) (1 Cor. xv. 49.) But if Seth, Cain, and Abel derived their corruption from the apostacy of their parents, then it is true, not only that their corruption, but that of all mankind, exists in consequence of the apostacy."

DR. SMALLEY. "We are not condemned being innocent. We were born sinners—we were conceived sinners, and as such only are condemned. We did not make ourselves sinners, it is true, by any bad conduct before we were inclined to sin—but no more did Adam. He was condemned only for being a sinner, and committing sin, and just so is every one of us. Only as, according to a divine constitution, founded in sovereign wisdom entirely, the trial of human nature in innocence was in Adam alone, (either including or exclusively of Eve,) so it may with propriety be said, "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" for had he persevered in obedience, the justification of life would have come upon all on account of his righteousness. It is agreeable to common sense, and seems plainly supposed in several texts and doctrines of scripture, that depravity of nature must be antecedent to all sinful actions, and the cause of them. But if so, there may be a wicked heart prior to knowledge. There

may be a propensity to sinful actions in a child, before it come to years to choose the evil, and refuse the good. This may be in us as early as we have souls."—*Smalley's Sermons, Sermon 11.* (See the whole Sermon.)

DR. GRIFFIN. "By the first creation or birth, mankind are united to the first Adam, and inherit the character which he possessed immediately after the fall; until, by a second creation or birth, they are united to the second Adam, and become partakers of his holiness." "Here is a wonder to be accounted for—sin tainting every individual of Adam's race, in every age, country, and condition, and surviving in every heart, all exertions to destroy it. One would think this might prove, if any thing could prove, that sin belongs to the *nature* of man as much as reason or speech, (though in a sense altogether compatible with blame,) and must be derived, like other universal attributes of our nature, from the original parent, propagated precisely like reason and speech, (neither of which is exercised at first,) propagated like many other propensities, mental as well as bodily, which certainly are inherited from parents, propagated like the noxious nature of other animals."—*Park Street Lectures*, pp. 11, 12, 13. (

ANDOVER CONFESSIO OF FAITH. "Adam, the federal head and representative of the human race, was placed in a state of probation, and in consequence of his disobedience, all his descendants are constituted sinners, and by nature every man is personally depraved."

DR. WOODS.—"I inquire whether Adam's sin effects his posterity in this way, viz: that by a

See Taylor's Concise

special divine constitution they are, in consequence of his fall, born in a state of moral depravity leading to certain ruin; or that, according to the common law of descent, they are partakers of a corrupt nature, the offspring being like the parent; and that suffering and death come upon them, not as personally innocent and pure, but as depraved and sinful beings. This opinion is maintained by Calvin, Edwards, Dwight, and orthodox divines generally. And this is the view of the subject which I consider as more conformable to the word of God, and to facts, than any other. As to those who deny the doctrine of native depravity, and the doctrine of imputation, and hold the doctrine of John Taylor and the Unitarians, and yet profess to believe that we are depraved and ruined in consequence of Adam's sin, I am at a loss to know what their belief amounts to. They say Adam's sin had an influence, but they deny all the conceivable ways in which it could have an influence and particularly the ways which are most clearly brought to view in Rom. v, and in other parts of Scripture.

If I am asked whether I hold the doctrine of *imputation* my reply must depend on the meaning you give to the word. Just make the question definite by substituting the explanation for the word, and an answer will be easy. Do you then mean what Stapfer, and Edwards, and many others mean, viz: that for God to give Adam a posterity like himself and to impute his sin to them, is one and the same thing. Then my answer is, that God did, in this sense impute Adam's sin to his posterity. This is the very thing implied in the doctrine of native depravity. By the

doctrine of imputation, do you mean that Adam's sin was the occasion of our ruin; that it was the distant, though real cause of our condemnation and death? I consider the doctrine, thus understood, to be according to scripture. Do you mean that we are guilty, that is, (according to the true original meaning of the word,) exposed to suffering on account of Adam's sin? In this view, too, I think the doctrine scriptural. But if the doctrine of imputation means, that for Adam's sin alone God inflicts the penalty of the law upon any one of his posterity, they themselves being perfectly sinless, then the doctrine, in my view, wants proof. There appears to be no such place for such a doctrine, seeing all Adam's posterity are, from the first morally depraved. And if they are allowed to be so, I know not why any one should think that God, makes no account of their depravity, in the sufferings which he brings upon them."—*Essay on Native Depravity*, pp. 186—188.

It would be easy to multiply quotations—but it cannot surely be necessary. There may have been a shade of difference among New England divines in their views of original sin. But so far as I have known, all who have claimed to be Calvinists, (until the New Haven divines arose,) have maintained that Adam is the federal head and representative of his posterity, the covenant was made with him, not only for himself, but his posterity, that a condition of the covenant was, that if he persevered in holiness, he should be the progenitor of a holy race, and if he apostatized, he should be the progenitor of an unholy race, and that all mankind come into the world in a

state of condemnation, and that none can be saved without regeneration and redemption by the blood of Christ. How widely these views differ from those maintained by the New Haven divines, is sufficiently apparent from extracts from their writings in this, and previous letters.

Yours affectionately.

## LETTER XV.

April 26, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

The views of the New Haven divines in relation to the doctrine of regeneration, differ widely from those which have been maintained by New England Calvinists. They maintain that the term regeneration is to be understood in two senses—the theological and popular sense. In the first sense, it denotes a change in the governing purpose of the mind, and is that act of the will or heart, by which the sinner, prompted by self-love, chooses God as his portion or chief good. In the last, or popular sense, it denotes a process or series of acts and states of mind, and includes all those acts which they denominate “using the means of regeneration.” They maintain that antecedent to regeneration, in the restricted, or theological sense, the selfish principle is suspended in the sinner’s heart, that the sinner then ceases to sin, and is in a state of neutrality, and that in this state, he uses the means of regeneration with motives which are neither right nor wrong—he takes into solemn consideration the question



whether the highest happiness is to be found in God or in the world—he pursues this inquiry, till it results in the conviction that such happiness is to be found in God only. He follows up the conviction with engrossing contemplation, till he discovers an excellence in divine objects which excites him to make desperate efforts to give his heart to God, and in this process of thought, of effort, and of action, he perseveres till it results in a change of heart. Thus they, in fact, represent regeneration as a gradual and progressive work. They also maintain that the sinner may so resist the grace of God, as to render it impossible for God to convert him.

The following quotations will exhibit their views on this subject.

“Regeneration considered as a moral change of which man is the subject, giving God the heart—making a new heart—loving God supremely, &c. are terms and phrases, which, in popular use, denote a complex act. Each, in popular use, denotes what, in a more analytical mode of speaking, may be viewed and described as made up of several particular acts and states of mind, or a series of such acts and states.”

“When we speak of the means of regeneration, we shall use the word regeneration in a more limited import than its ordinary popular import, and shall confine it chiefly, for the sake of convenient phraseology, to the act of the will or heart, in distinction from other mental acts connected with it, or to that act of the will or heart which consists in a preference of God to every other object, or to that disposition of heart, or governing affection or purpose of the man, which

consecrates him to the service of God." "We proceed to say, then, that before the act of the will or heart, in which the sinner first prefers God to every other object, the object of the preference must be viewed or estimated as the greatest good. Before the object can be viewed as the greatest good, it must be compared with other objects, as both are sources or means of good. Before this act of comparing, there must be an act dictated, not by selfishness, but by self love, in which the mind determines to direct its thoughts to the objects for the sake of considering their relative value, of forming a judgment respecting it, and of choosing the one or the other as the chief good." "Divine truth does not become a means to this end, until the selfish principle, so long cherished in the heart, is suspended; and the mind is left to the control of that constitutional desire for happiness, which is an original principle of our nature." "Let the sinner, then, as a being who loves happiness and desires the highest degree of it, under the influence of such a desire, take into solemn consideration the question whether the highest happiness is to be found in God or in the world; let him pursue this inquiry, if need be, till it result in the conviction that such happiness is to be found in God only; and let him follow up this conviction with that intent and engrossing contemplation of the realities which truth discloses, and with that stirring up of his sensibilities in view of them, which shall invest the world, when considered as his only portion, with an aspect of insignificance, of gloom, and even of terror, and which shall chill and suspend his present active

love of it ; and let the contemplation be persevered in, till it shall discover a reality and excellence in the objects of holy affection, which shall put him upon direct and desperate efforts to fix his heart upon them ; and let this process of thought, of effort, and of action, be entered upon as one which is never to be abandoned until the end proposed by it is accomplished—until the only living and true God is loved and chosen, as his God forever ; and we say, that in this way the work of his regeneration, through grace, may be accomplished.” “ God tells the sinner, that it is better to obey than to disobey him. The thought conveyed in the mind of the sinner is an arrow in his sentient nature. It penetrates, it fastens, it is felt. The appropriate tendency of the feelings is to the voluntary act of sober, solemn consideration. This act the sinner has power to do or to avoid. And here the mental process of using the means of regeneration, either begins or does not begin. If he thus considers, it begins, and now the appropriate tendency of consideration is to deepen emotion ; and thus, by the mutual influence of thought and feeling, the tendency of the mind to that entire mental process which we have described, and the tendency of the process to a change of heart become undeniable, and conspicuous in human consciousness.” —*Ch. Spec. for 1829*, pp. 16, 17, 18, 19, 32, 33, 227.

“ As to those who hold to the infusion of something into the soul previous, either in the order of time or of nature, to the first right affection, and as a sort of fountain from which such affection is to flow, we would only say, that

although we do not impute to them the blasphemy, yet we cannot wholly acquit them of the absurdity of Gibbon, who, in pretending to describe the manner in which the primitive teachers of christianity were inspired, says, they were mere organs of the Holy Spirit, just as a pipe or flute is of him who blows into it."—*Ch. Spec. for 1833*, p. 361.

"I do not believe that the grace of God can be truly said to be irresistible, in the primary and proper sense of this term. But I do believe that in all cases it may be resisted by man as a free, moral agent."—*Dr. Taylor's letter to Dr. Hawes*.

"The means of reclaiming grace, which meet him in the word and Spirit of God, are those by which the Father draws, induces, just such sinners as himself, voluntarily to submit to Christ; and these means all favor the act of his immediate submission. To this influence he can yield, and thus be drawn by the Father. This influence he can resist, and thus harden his heart against God."—*Ch. Spec. for 1831*, p. 637.

"Free moral agents can do wrong under all possible preventing influence." "What finite being, then, we ask, can know that a universe of free agents, who possess, of course, the power of sinning, could have been held back from the exercise of that power, in every possible conjunction of circumstances, even by *all* the influences to obedience which God can exert upon them without destroying their freedom."—*Ch. Spec. for 1830*, p. 563.

Compare the foregoing with the following extracts.

PRESIDENT EDWARDS. "The nature of virtue being a positive thing, can proceed from nothing but God's immediate influence and must take its rise from creation or infusion by God. For it must be either from that, or from our own choice and production, either at once, or gradually by culture. But it cannot begin, or take its rise from the latter, viz. our choice or voluntary diligence. For if there exists nothing at all of the nature of virtue before, it cannot come from cultivation; for by the supposition, there is nothing of the nature of virtue to cultivate. The first virtuous choice, or a disposition to it, must be immediately given, or it must proceed from a preceding choice. If the first virtuous act of will or choice, be from a preceding act of will or choice, that preceding act of choice must be a virtuous act of choice, which is contrary to the supposition." "As to man's inability to convert himself. In them that are totally corrupt, there can be no tendency towards their making their hearts better, till they begin to repent of the badness of their hearts. For if they do not repent they still approve of it, and that tends to maintain their badness and confirm it. The heart can have no tendency to make itself better, till it begins to have a better tendency; for therein consists its badness, viz. its having no good tendency or inclination. And to begin to have a good tendency, or which is the same thing, a tendency and inclination to be better, is the same thing as to begin already to be better." "The first virtue we have, certainly does not arise from virtuous endeavors preceding that first virtue. For that is to suppose virtue before the

first virtue. If the answer be, that they are no good endeavors, they have nothing at all of the nature of the exercise of any good disposition, or any good aim and intention, or of any virtuous sincerity; I ask what tendency can such efforts of the mind, as are wholly empty of all goodness, have to produce true moral goodness in the heart?" "Conversion is a work that is done at once and not gradually." "Those who deny infusion of grace by the Holy Spirit, must, of necessity, deny the Spirit to do any thing at all." "The questions relating to efficacious grace, controverted between us and the Arminians, are two: 1, whether the grace of God in giving us saving virtue, be determined and decisive. 2, whether saving virtue be decisively given by a supernatural and sovereign operation of the Spirit of God." "The dispute about grace, being resistible or irresistible, is perfect nonsense. For the effect of grace is upon the will; so that it is nonsense, except it be proper to say that a man with his will can resist his own will; that is, except it be possible for a man to will a thing and not will it at the same time."—*Edward's Remarks*, pp. 182, 217, 218, 223, 224, 255, 275.

DR. DWIGHT. "In regeneration, the very same thing is done by the Spirit of God for the soul, which was done for Adam by the same divine agent at his creation. The soul of man was created with a relish for spiritual objects. The soul of every man, who becomes a Christian, is renewed by the communication of the same relish." "The carnal mind, that is the original, natural disposition of man is enmity against



God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. Before this change, therefore, there is no holiness in the character—no relish for spiritual good—no exercise of virtuous volition—no pursuit of virtuous conduct. All these things begin to be chosen, and to be practiced, after they begin to be relished, and the first relish for them exists in this renovation of the mind.” “This change is instantaneous. This position has been as much controverted as any of those advanced in this discourse; but, as it seems to me, with no solid support either from reason or revelation. The scheme of those who oppose this doctrine appears generally to be this; the subject of regeneration is supposed to begin at some time or other, to turn his attention to spiritual concerns. He begins seriously to think on them; to read concerning them; to dwell upon them in the house of God, in his meditations, in his closet, and in his conversation. By degrees he gains a more thorough acquaintance with the guilt and danger of sin, and the importance of holiness, pardon, acceptance, and salvation. By degrees, also, he renounces one sinful practice and propensity after another, and thus finally arrives at a neutral character, in which he is neither a sinner, in the absolute sense, nor yet a Christian. Advancing from this stage, he begins, at length, to entertain, in a small degree, virtuous affections, and to adopt virtuous conduct; and thus proceeds from one virtuous attainment to another, while he lives. Some of the facts here supposed, taken separately, are real; for some of them undoubtedly take place in the minds, and lives of those who become religious men. But the whole consider-

ed together, and as a scheme concerning this subject, is, in my view, entirely erroneous.” “There is a period, in which every man who becomes holy, at first becomes holy. At a period, immediately antecedent to this, whenever it takes place, he was not holy. The commencement of holiness in his mind was, therefore, instantaneous; or it began to exist at some given moment of time. Nor is it in the nature of things possible, that it should be otherwise.”—*Dwight's Theology*, Vol. 2, pp. 419, 420, 424.

DR. SMALLEY. “Regeneration is such an essential change of nature, as supposes something created in a proper and strict sense. It is expressly spoken of under the name and notion of a creation in a number of places. Eph. iv. 24. “The new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Col. iii. 10. “The new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him.” And 2 Cor. v. 17. “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.” We may also observe, that most if not all other phrases, by which this change is expressed, plainly convey the same idea of it, and of the manner in which it is effected.” “If it be true that man is by nature totally depraved in the spirit of the mind, it is a plain case that the beginning of holiness in him, can be no otherwise than by a new creation. When spiritual life is once begun in the soul, in however low a degree, it may be preserved and increased by moral means. But the first production of the radical principle of life, can no more be the effect of any second cause, than the first root or seed of any plant or tree, could have been pro-

duced by rain, sunshine, and cultivation. Those who hold that regeneration is effected by the moral power of light and truth, either leave true holiness wholly out of the account from the first to last, or suppose mankind not totally destitute of it by nature; or else talk in a manner altogether inconsistent."

DR. STRONG. "Regeneration is that change from which holy exercises proceed, and is therefore the beginning of spiritual life in the soul. It is the beginning of that moral conformity to God which is the true preparation for heaven and its blessedness." "It is not the modification of any moral principle, which previously existed in the mind, but the production of one that is new. The heart or the will and affections are the seat of this change; therefore, the increase of doctrinal or speculative knowledge, be the degree ever so great, hath no tendency to regenerate a person. Doctrinal light hath its seat in the understanding, and it is contrary to all experience, that more knowledge of an object to which the heart or will is, from its very nature opposed, will change the opposition into love. We may know this from the objects of love and hatred, which daily occur in the experience of life. If the taste of the mind be opposed to the nature of an object, the more the object is seen, the more an opposing taste will exert itself, the divine action in regenerating an unholy soul is, therefore, on the heart or will and affections. What we call a new moral principle, may also be called a new taste, relish, temper, disposition, or habit of feeling respecting moral objects and truth."

DR. BACKUS. "From the account of this

change which hath been taken from the word of truth, it appears that God operateth on the heart by the Spirit, previously to its holy exertions, and that all its exercises are the effects of this divine operation." "The heart or the temper of the mind is changed in regeneration. The design of it is, to restore the holy temper which was lost by the apostacy." "Regeneration is an instantaneous change. There can be no point in which one is neither in a renewed nor an unrenewed state; and therefore, when the new heart is given, it must be given in an instant." "The more attentively we examine the doctrine of progressive regeneration, the more fully it will appear that it is built on principles which deny the full extent of man's depravity."—*Backus on Regeneration*, pp. 15, 20, 25.

DR. GRIFFIN. "Yielding then to the point that man is an enemy to God till the change is complete, it may yet be asked, is not that enmity gradually weakened? It cannot be radically weakened till its cause is weakened, which is supreme self-love, (or more generally the love of the creature, for the social affections, too, may set up their objects in opposition,) struggling against the law and administration of God. But the love of the creature, in which self-love is included, cannot be weakened before the love of God is introduced." "In every view, then, it appears that there can be no approaches towards regeneration in the antecedent temper of the heart. The moment before the change, the sinner is as far from sanctification as darkness is from light, as sin is from holiness." "What is the character of the natural heart? And what

is holiness ? are the two questions, which on this subject must divide the world. For if holiness is a simple principle, and first introduced in regeneration, especially, if it is a principle of supreme love to God, following supreme selfishness, nothing can be plainer than that the change is as sudden as the first drop that falls into a vessel, or the first ray that penetrates a dungeon."—*Park Street Lectures*, pp. 93, 97, 101.

DR. WOODS. "The renewal of sinners is effected by divine power. The scripture teaches this in a variety of ways. It represents that believers are God's workmanship, that they are born of God ; that he quickens them, that he gives them a new heart, turns them from sin, and makes them obedient and holy. It ascribes to God, as the supreme cause, every particular thing which constitutes the character of Christians. This conception of the divine power in regeneration is plain and simple. We look at holiness in man and ascribe it to God as its cause. The view we take of this new spiritual creation is just as simple and obvious as of the natural creation. The heavens and the earth which once did not exist, but which now exist before our eyes, are *effects* flowing from the operation of God's power. He created them. They exist in consequence of the act of his will. There that which is proclaimed is material, or physical ; in the other case spiritual, or moral ; things in their nature altogether different from each other, but equally effects, resulting from the operation of divine power ; so that the honor of renewing sinners is due to God, as really and directly, as the honor of creating the world. This is a prac-

tical truth, taught clearly in the scriptures, and impressed upon the hearts of all Christians, and impressed more and more deeply as they advance in the divine life." "How can it be supposed that such a change results from any thing in man? If we should suppose this, we should quickly find our supposition contradicted by the word of God, and should be taught that our reliance must be, 'not on him that willeth nor on him that runneth, but on God who showeth mercy.'" "The renewal of sinners is exercised in a sovereign manner. By this is meant that those who are regenerated by divine power, are no more deserving of the favor bestowed upon them, and of themselves no more inclined to turn from their sins, than those who are left to perish. The reason why one man is renewed, rather than others, cannot be found in any attribute of his character, or in any exercise of his understanding, his affections, or his will. Unquestionably God, who is infinitely wise, has a good reason for all that he does. But the reason of his conduct in this case, as in many others, lies in his own mind."—*Doctrinal Tracts*, No. 19.

These extracts afford a fair specimen of the views which are entertained by the great mass of New England ministers on this subject.

Yours affectionately.



## LETTER XVI.

May 16, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

The views entertained by the New Haven divines respecting the influence of self-love, are entirely at variance with what has been denominated New England Divinity. According to them, all moral action, whether holy or sinful, is prompted by self-love, or the desire of happiness ; in other words, every moral being makes his own happiness his ultimate end. Thus they virtually destroy the radical distinction between holiness and sin, making them both proceed from the same principle of action. While the sinner chooses the world for his portion or chief good from a regard to his own happiness, the saint chooses God for his portion or chief good for the same reason. The distinction of course between the saint and the sinner, consists, not in their having different ultimate ends, but in their adopting different means to obtain the same ultimate end. Their language is :

“ There is no more difficulty in accounting for the fact, that the yielding sinner supremely loves God, from the impulse of a regard to his

own happiness, than there is in explaining the opposite fact, of his having formerly, under the influence of the same principle, when perverted, supremely loved his idols; which, though contrary to his reason and conscience, his heart wickedly preferred as his highest good. The self-love that was previously in servitude to his selfish inclinations, and perverted by their unhalloed influence, now breaks away from that servitude, as his soul, under the power of light and motives rendered effectual by the Holy Ghost, is made to see and feel where its true interest lies. And no sooner is this duty seen and felt, through the influence of the Spirit, than the man who is so constituted that he must have a regard to what he views as his own highest good, at once chooses Christ and his service as the means of securing it."—*Christian Spectator*, for 1833, pp. 357, 358.

"This self-love, or desire of happiness is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference, or choice, which fix supremely on any object. In every moral being who forms a moral character, there must be a first moral act of preference or choice. This must respect some one object, God, or Mammon, as the chief good, or as an object of supreme affection. Now, whence comes such a choice or preference? Not from a previous choice or preference of the same object, for we speak of the *first* choice of the object. The answer which human consciousness gives, is that the being constituted with a capacity for happiness desires to be happy; and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the

greatest happiness may be derived, and as in this respect he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses or prefers, one or the other as his chief good."—*Id. for* 1829, p. 21.

"Of all specific voluntary action, the happiness of the agent, in some form, is the *ultimate end*." *Id.* p. 24. "In this process, the sinner, from the desire of happiness, turns his thoughts to the decisions and discoveries of eternal truth. He sees and feels that the world, taken as his portion in this life, brings with it eternal torment in the next. Through the dread of the misery connected with it, this object of affection loses its attractions, and is, as the case may be, so overcast with gloominess, that his active love and pursuit of it ceases. Now too, he sees that the supreme good is in God, only; and there is a desirableness surpassing what belongs to all things beside, in becoming a child and heir of God."—*Id.* p. 33.

"While self-love awakens intense desires to comply with the terms of mercy, while it powerfully and successfully prompts the mind to look toward the only object of supreme affection, that the heart may fix upon it, still the object is too dimly seen—still however it is to be remembered that the sinner, disgusted with the former idols of his heart, and feeling deeply his exposure to the wrath of God, strongly desires, be the appointed means what they may, to escape the dreadful doom; that he is willing to fix, and does in fact fix the eye of contemplation upon the object of holy affection, and does with such glimpses of its glories as he may obtain, feel their attractions, and summon his heart to that love of

God, his Saviour, which is the only condition of his mercy.”—*Id.* pp. 230, 231.

Compare these with the following extracts :

PRESIDENT EDWARDS. “The first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendantly excellent and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themselves, and not any conceived relation they bear to self or self interest. Some say that divine love arises from *self-love*, and that it is impossible in the nature of things for any man to love God, or any other being, but that love to himself must be the foundation of it. But I humbly suppose, it is for want of consideration they say so. They argue that whoever loves God, and so desires his glory, or the enjoyment of him, desires these things as his own happiness; the glory of God, and the beholding and the enjoying of his perfections, are considered as things agreeable to him, tending to make him happy. And so they say, it is through self-love, or a desire of his own happiness, that he desires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious perfections. There is no doubt, but that after God’s glory and beholding his perfections, are becoming agreeable to him, he will desire them as he desires his own happiness. But how came these things to be so very agreeable to him, that he esteems it his highest happiness to glorify God? &c. Is not this the fruit of love? Must not a man first love God, or have his heart united to him before he will esteem God’s good his own, and before he will desire the glorifying and enjoying of God as his happiness? It is not strong arguing, because *after* a man has his heart united to God in love,

and, *as a fruit of this*, he desires his glory and enjoyment as his own happiness, that therefore, a desire of this happiness must needs be the *cause and foundation* of his love, unless it be strong arguing that because a father begat a son, therefore his son certainly begat him.”—*Edward's works*, Vol. v., pp. 129—140.

DAVID BRAINERD. “These things I saw with great clearness when I was thought to be dying, and God gave me great concern for his church and interest in the world at this time. Not so much, because the late remarkable influence upon the minds of the people was abated and almost wholly gone, as because the false religion, the heats of imagination, and wild and selfish commotions of the animal affections, which attended the work of grace had prevailed so far. This was that which my mind dwelt upon day and night, and this to me was the darkest appearance respecting religion in the land. For it was this chiefly that had prejudiced the world against inward religion. This I saw, was the greatest misery of all, that so few saw any manner of difference between those exercises which are spiritual and holy, and those which have *self-love for their beginning, centre and end*.”—*Brainerd's Life*, p. 498.

DR. BELLAMY. “It is true, many a carnal mind is ravished to think that God loves him, and will save him; but in this case, it is not the true character of God which charms the heart; it is not God that is loved. Strictly speaking, he only loves himself. And self-love is the only source of all his affections. Or, if we call it love to God, it is of no other kind than sinners feel to one another. *For sinners love those that*

*love them.*”—*Bellamy's works*, Vol. II. p. 507.

DR. HOPKINS. “From this scriptural and rational view of disinterested affection, in which all true virtue, piety and charity consist, may be seen what a great and dangerous mistake they have made who suppose there is no virtue or true religion, but that which consists in self-love, or originates from it, and that no man ever acts, or can act from any other principle, whatever he may think or pretend. Surely, these ‘call evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.’ They call that virtue and goodness which is directly opposed to all true virtue and goodness, and in which all moral evil consists.”—*Hopkins's System*, Vol. I. p. 477.

DR. SMALLEY. “Selfishness is so universally condemned, and so much is said in the scriptures against self-seeking, that one would think no labored proof were necessary to convince any man who believes the Bible, or any man of common sense, whether he believes the Bible, or not, that self-love cannot be the primary source of all true virtue and religion. Yet, however strange, so it is, many great philosophers, and some learned divines, have been professedly of opinion that the best actions of good men, and their most virtuous affections, proceed from a mere regard to themselves, as their first principle and last end. They think that a well regulated self-love will influence a man to whatsoever things are honest, amiable, or of good report; though a misguided self-love often leads men into the reverse of all these. That as, whenever we transgress the rule of right, it is



from a wrong idea of our own interest, so when we conform to that rule, it is only with a view to our own interest rightly understood. Accordingly they suppose, as one of their poets hath said, 'self-love and social are the same.' And several systems of divinity widely different in other respects, agree in this, that all religion, at bottom, is nothing but self-love." "Indeed to suppose self the primary principle, and only ultimate end of the virtuous and good, is obviously to confound all real distinction between the best and the worst of characters. All men, and undoubtedly devils, also, have self-love enough; and are capable of all those actions and affections which have this only for their basis. If therefore, this were the bottom principle in the virtuous and good, it is plain there would be no essential difference of character between saints and sinners, or between the angels of heaven, and devils in hell. All the difference would be *circumstantial*; arising from the different conditions in which they are placed, the different treatment they receive, and the different ideas they have of the disposition of other beings towards them, or of their own interest."—*Smalley's Sermons*, pp. 115, 116, 118, 119.

DR. GRIFFIN. "While the wicked place their whole happiness in gratifying affections which terminate in *themselves* or a *limited circle*, the right things, in which the good place their highest happiness, (I suppose it will not be denied,) are the glory of God, and the prosperity of his kingdom. Now I ask, is the satisfaction which they hope to derive to *themselves* from that good, or the *good itself*, their supreme *object*? Do they rejoice more in the reflection that *they* (rather

than others,) shall *enjoy* the sight of God's glory, than that God will be glorified? If so, they no longer place their supreme happiness in his glory but in their own gratification—a gratification, more refined indeed than the grosser pleasures of sense, but still personal and private. To say that they place their supreme happiness in the glory of God, and yet make their own happiness the highest object, is a plain contradiction. To place their supreme happiness in the glory of God, necessarily implies that they love and value his glory more than any other object.—*Park-street Lectures*, pp. 80, 81.

DR. PORTER. “Deliberately to admit that self-love must be the primary ground of moral affection, is to supersede all intelligent discussion about *regeneration*, or any of the kindred doctrines of grace. This one principle sweeps the whole away. There remains no radical distinction of character between the saint and the sinner. The most depraved individual on earth, or even among apostate spirits is doubtless the centre of his own affections. And though he may have perverted views of what is his real interest, he means, notwithstanding to act, and does act from a ‘primary’ regard to himself. And if this is the highest principle of action to a holy being, then an angel and a devil stand on the same ground as to moral character; in other words, there is no distinction between holiness and sin.”—*Letters on Revivals*, pp. 88, 89.

The views contained in the foregoing extracts are the views which have been maintained by the great body of orthodox ministers in New England on this subject.

I am yours, very affectionately.

## LETTER XVII.

May 18, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Another important point of difference between the modern speculations and New England Calvinism, relates to the agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. What the precise views of the New Haven divines are, in relation to this point, it is somewhat difficult to ascertain from their writings. They have been extensively understood to discard the doctrine of a direct, immediate, divine efficiency; and to hold, that the Holy Spirit never operates on the mind, but through the medium of truth or motives. This doctrine is explicitly maintained by Mr. Finney in his sermon entitled "Sinners bound to change their own hearts," and has been repeatedly avowed in conversation by Dr. Beecher. I have also heard Dr. Beecher affirm, that Dr. Taylor's views on this subject accorded with his own. That such are the views of the New Haven divines, seems to be implied in much which they have written. They say, (*Ch. Spec. for 1833*, p. 356,) "Indeed we know of no other effectual

hold which this divine agent can have on the sinner whom he would turn from the error of his ways, but that which consists in *so* bringing the truths of the Bible into contact with his understanding and moral sensibilities, that he shall voluntarily shun the threatened evil, and choose the proffered good." If this language was not intended to convey the idea, that the only agency which the Spirit exerts in regeneration, is so to bring truth and motives before the mind of the sinner, as to induce or persuade him to turn from the error of his ways; it is impossible to tell what meaning was intended. All their representations respecting the susceptibilities of unrenewed men to be influenced by the motives of the gospel, and the tendency of truth, when clearly seen, to weaken and suspend the selfish principle, and produce a change of heart, are suited to make the same impression. Still, however, in their review of Dr. Tyler's *Strictures*, they say, "We have never called in question the doctrine of an immediate and direct agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration." Whether they meant, by this declaration, any thing more, than that they had never formally, or in so many words, called this doctrine in question; or whether they intended to affirm that it is still an article of their faith, I am unable to decide. Be this however, as it may, the great body of those who profess to adopt the sentiments of the New Haven divines do discard this doctrine. They deny that the more the sinner sees of God, the more he hates his character, and that he invariably resists every motive to holy obedience, till a new moral temper is created or implanted in his soul by the

power of the Holy Ghost. They maintain, with Dr. Beecher and Mr. Finney, that the influence of the Spirit in regeneration, is a persuasive influence exerted through the medium of truth or motives. This, therefore, may be regarded as a prominent doctrine of new divinity.

That this is utterly at variance with the views of our standard New England divines, is what I shall now attempt to show.

PRESIDENT EDWARDS. "Observe that the question with some is, whether the Spirit of God does any thing at all in these days, since the scriptures have been completed. With those that allow that he does any thing, the question cannot be, whether his influence be immediate; for if he does any thing at all, his influence must be immediate." "The Apostle says, 'In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.' This phrase, *made without hands*, in scripture, always denotes God's immediate power, above the course of nature, above second causes." "There are two things relating to the doctrine of efficacious grace, wherein lies the main difference between Calvinists and Arminians as to this doctrine. First, that the grace of God is determining and decisive as to the conversion of a sinner, or a man's becoming a good man, and having those virtuous qualifications that entitle him to an interest in Christ and his salvation. Second, that the power and grace and operation of the Holy Spirit in, or towards the conversion of a sinner, is immediate, that the habit of true virtue or holiness is immediately implanted or infused; that

the operation goes so far, that a man has habitual holiness given to him instantly, wholly by the operation of the Spirit of God, and not gradually by assistance concurring with our endeavors.”—*Miscellaneous Observations*, pp. 176, 182, 187, 220.

DR. BELLAMY. “In regeneration, there is a new, divine, and holy taste and relish begotten in the heart by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God.” “That the idea of a natural beauty supposes an internal sense, implanted by our Creator, by which the mind is capacitated to discern such kind of beauty, is clearly illustrated and proved, by a late ingenious philosopher. And that the idea of spiritual sense, communicated to the soul by the Spirit of God, in the work of the new creation, is also as clearly illustrated and proved, by a late divine, whose praise is in all the churches.” “Are men regenerated by the law or by the gospel? If, by regenerated, is meant enabled to see the holy beauty of divine truths, we are regenerated neither by the law nor by the gospel, nor by any external means or instructions whatsoever, but by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit.”—*Bellamy's Works*, Vol. I. pp. 502, 503, 532.

DR. HOPKINS. “The divine operation in regeneration, of which the new heart is the effect, is immediate, or it is not wrought by the energy of any means as the cause of it, but by the immediate power and energy of the Holy Spirit. It is called a creation, and the divine agency in it is as much without any medium, as in creating something from nothing. Men are not regenerated in the sense in which we are now consider-



ing regeneration, by light or the word of God. This is evident from what hath been said under the last particular. If the evil eye which is total darkness, and shuts all the light out, be the evil corrupt heart of man, then his corrupt heart must be renewed, in order to there being any true light in the mind, and previous to it. There must be a discerning heart, which is the same with the new heart, in order to see the light; and therefore this cannot be produced by light.” —*Hopkins’ System, Vol. 1, p. 457.*

DR. DWIGHT. “The soul of Adam was created with a relish for spiritual objects. The soul of every man, who becomes a Christian, is renewed by the communication of the same relish.” “It has been extensively supposed, that the Spirit of grace regenerates mankind, by communicating to them new, clear, and juster views of spiritual objects. The understanding being thus enlightened and convinced, the heart, it is supposed, yields itself to this conviction; and the man spontaneously becomes, under its influence, a child of God. I shall not attempt here to describe the metaphysical nature of the work of regeneration; yet it appears to me clear, that the account which I have now given of this subject, is not scriptural nor just. Without a relish for spiritual objects, I cannot see that any discoveries concerning them, however clear and bright, can render them pleasing to the soul. If they are unpleasing in their very nature, they cannot be made agreeable by having that nature unfolded more clearly. He who disrelishes the taste of wine, will not relish it the more, the more

distinctly and perfectly he perceives that taste. Nor will any account of its agreeableness to others, however, clearly given, and with whatever evidence supported, render the taste agreeable to him. To enable him to relish it, it seems indispensable that his own taste should be changed, and in this manner fitted to realize the pleasantness of the wine. Light is either evidence, or the perception of it; evidence of the true nature of the object which is contemplated, or the perception of that evidence. But the great difficulty in the present case is this: the nature of the object perceived is disrelished. The more then it is perceived, the more it must be disrelished of course, so long as the present taste continues. It seems therefore indispensable, that, in order to the usefulness of such superior light to the mind, its relish with respect to spiritual objects should first be changed."—*Dwight's Theology*, Vol. 1. pp. 419, 422.

DR. SMALLEY. "If it be true that man is by nature totally depraved in the spirit of his mind, it is a plain case, that the beginning of holiness in him can be no otherwise than by a new creation. When spiritual life is once begun in the soul, in however low a degree, it may be preserved and increased by moral means; as well as any plant or animal can be kept alive, and made to grow by natural means. But the first production of the radical principle of this life, can no more be the effect of any second cause, than the first root or seed of any plant or tree could have been produced by rain, sunshine, and cultivation." "It is easy to conceive that whatever propensities of nature one previously has, may

be brought into exercise by arguments and motives adapted to operate upon such propensities. But how to bring into existence a propensity of nature or principle of action radically new, and essentially different from every thing in the native mind of man, is the great difficulty. It is a plain case, I think, that it can never be brought to life, otherwise than by being, in a proper and strict sense, created in them again."—*Smalley's Sermons*, pp. 287, 289, 290.

DR. GRIFFIN. "How can the motives of religion be the instruments of producing a new disposition, when that disposition must exist before the motives can take hold of the heart? Or the question may be decided by fact. • Have not all these motives assailed the heart for many years, without taking away a particle of its opposition? For months together have they not been set home upon the conscience, without at all weakening the enmity? How comes it to pass, then, that, at length, in one moment, they enter the heart, and rise to supreme dominion? Have they all at once broken their way through, and assisted in new-modelling a heart, on which, till that moment, they could have no influence? The decisive question is, was the power applied to the motives to open a passage for themselves, or to the heart to open a passage for them? Let the event declare—the heart was new before the motives entered."—*Park Street Lectures*, pp. 157, 158.

DR. PORTER. "In regeneration, it has been said, the sinner's heart is changed by the influence of truth and motives, presented by God; just as one man's mind is changed in any case

by the persuasion of another. How does the orator persuade his hearers? By appeals to their understanding, conscience, passion, interest, &c.; that is, by addressing principles that are in the men already,—principles that are in *all* men. He operates on their minds by an objective influence; by the presentation of external motives adapted to sway their purpose. This is all he can do. But is this all that God can do? He addresses men by the solemn motives of the gospel, through preaching, and other external means of persuasion. But is this all that he can do? Certainly not; for besides the presentation of motives, through the instrumentality of second causes, he can exert an immediate influence on minds, such as no man has the power of exerting on another man; and this is the influence which he does exert in regeneration. To deny this, is to deny special grace. For if regeneration is produced by an influence the same as that employed by one man on the mind of another, in common persuasion; certainly it is not, in any sense, a supernatural work. It takes place according to the laws of nature, in the ordinary course of cause and effect.”—*Letters on Revivals*, pp. 84, 85.

Such are the views which have been uniformly maintained by New England Calvinists on this subject. The opposite theory is an old Pelagian theory revived. I do not know of a writer, claiming to be a Calvinist, who ever advanced this theory, till these modern theologians arose.

I am yours, very affectionately,

## LETTER XVIII.

May 18, 1837.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

Dr. Taylor, in his letter to Dr. Hawes, says :  
“ I believe that all who are renewed by the Holy Spirit are elected or chosen of God from eternity, that they should be holy ; not on account of foreseen faith or good works, but according to the good pleasure of his will.”

This statement, taken by itself in its most obvious meaning, would seem to contain a correct view of the doctrine of election, as maintained by Calvinists. But when we compare this statement with other statements made by him and his associates, we are compelled to conclude that he must attach to the language a meaning entirely different from that in which it has been commonly received. The grand question at issue between Arminians and Calvinists, on this subject, is, and ever has been, whether election is conditional or unconditional ; in other words, whether God has elected some to everlasting life, because he foresaw they would comply with the terms of salvation or whether their compliance is a consequence

of their election. The Arminians maintain that God truly desires, all things considered, that all men should become holy and be saved—that he not only offers salvation to all, but does all that he can, consistently with their moral freedom, to induce all to comply with the conditions of pardon. They maintain also, that sinners may effectually resist the grace of God, and thus render it impossible for God to convert them. The purpose of election, according to them, is God's eternal purpose to save those who, he foresaw, would cease to resist his grace, and submit to his authority.

The Calvinists, on the other hand maintain that such is the depravity of the human heart, that no man will comply with the conditions of pardon, until he is made willing in the day of God's power. They maintain also, that the reason why God does not secure the holiness and happiness of all his moral creatures, is not because he is unable to do it, but because he does not see it to be, on the whole, for the best; that for wise reasons, which he has not revealed, he has determined to make some the trophies of his grace, and to leave others to persist in sin and perish.

That the views of the New Haven divines on this subject are essentially Arminian, is what I shall now undertake to show. And,

In the first place, they maintain that "God, all things considered, prefers holiness to sin, in all instances in which the latter takes place." If this be so, it must be God's choice, all things considered, that all men should become holy and be saved, and his infinite benevolence will



prompt him to do all in his power to bring all men to repentance. Accordingly they say, Ch. Spec. 1832, p. 660 : " God, not only prefers, on the whole, that his creatures should forever perform their duties, rather than neglect them ; but purposes, on his part to do all in his power to promote this very object, in his kingdom." But if God does all in his power to bring all men to repentance, then the distinction between saints and sinners does not result from the sovereign purpose and election of God, but from man's free will. It is not true that God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, for he would have mercy on all if he could. " He would have prevented all sin in his moral universe, but could not."

Again. The New Haven divines maintain that sinners may so resist the grace of God as to render it impossible for God to convert them. " In all cases, it (the grace of God) may be resisted by man as a free moral agent, and it never becomes effectual to salvation till it is unresisted;" that is, till the selfish principle is suspended, and the sinner ceases to sin, and begins to use the means of regeneration. " Free moral agents can do wrong under all possible preventing influence. Using their powers as they may use them, they will sin." " We know that a moral system implies the existence of free agents, with power to act in despite of all opposing power. If this be so, what election can there be except what is founded on foreseen repentance and faith? Most certainly, according to this theory, before God could have purposed to save any individuals, he must have foreseen

that those individuals would cease to resist his grace, and thus render it possible for him to convert them. His purpose to save them, therefore, must have been grounded on the foresight of their submission.

Again. The statements of this doctrine, contained in the *Christian Spectator*, evidently proceed on the same supposition.

“God offers the same necessary conditions of acceptance to all men; desires from the heart that all men, as free agents, would comply with them and live; brings no positive influence upon any mind against compliance; but, on the contrary, brings all those kinds, and all that degree of influence in favor of it upon each individual, which a system of measures best arranged for the success of grace in a world of rebellion allows; and finally, saves, without respect of kindred, rank, or country; whether Scythian, Greek, or Jew, all who, under this influence, accept the terms, and work out their own salvation, and reprobates alike all who refuse.”—*Christian Spectator*, 1831, p. 635.

According to this representation, the purpose of election is simply God's determination to save those who, he foresaw, would accept the terms of pardon. This is still more explicitly expressed in the following passage:

“The means of reclaiming grace, which meet him in the word and spirit of God, are those by which the father draws, *induces* just such sinners as himself voluntarily to submit to Christ; and these means all favor the act of his immediate submission. To this influence he can yield, and thus be drawn of the Father. This influence he

can resist, and thus harden his heart against God. Election involves nothing more, as it respects his individual case, except one fact—the certainty to the divine mind, whether the sinner will yield to the means of grace, and voluntarily turn to God, or whether he will continue to harden his heart till the means of grace are withdrawn.”—*Id.* p. 637.

Now, what is this but the Arminian view of election founded on the foresight of faith and obedience? God employs the best means which his wisdom can devise to bring all men to repentance. He draws, induces them to submit to Christ. Every sinner can yield to these means, or he can resist them. Election involves nothing more, except one fact, the CERTAINTY TO THE DIVINE MIND; that is, the divine foreknowledge, “whether the sinner will yield to the means of grace, &c.” In other words, the purpose of election is God’s purpose to save all who he foresaw would obey the gospel. This is the very doctrine which the Arminians have always maintained. They say again :

“The purpose of election, rightly interpreted, then, in our view, brings the God of justice and grace into immediate contact with our rebellious world, staying the execution of justice, and urging gracious terms of reconciliation on men, on purpose to bring the matter to a speedy issue, and to gain whom, in the methods of his wisdom he can, over to his authority and kingdom.”—*Id.* p. 638.

Here again we are brought to the same point. God’s purpose of election, is his purpose to gain as many of the human race as he can. But what

election is this, if God did, all things considered, desire the salvation of Judas as much as the salvation of Peter, and if he did all in his power to secure the happiness and holiness of Judas, how can it be said that Peter was elected in distinction from Judas? Who made them to differ?

That this view of the doctrine of election differs widely from that which has been maintained by the orthodox divines of New England, might be shown by abundant quotations from their writings. I shall give only a few specimens.

PRESIDENT EDWARDS. "It is most absurd to call such a conditional election as they talk of, by the name of election, seeing there is a necessary connection between faith in Jesus Christ and eternal life. Those that believe in Christ must be saved according to God's inviolable constitution of things. But if they say that election is only God's determination in the general, that all that believe shall be saved, in what sense can this be called election? They are not persons that are here chosen, but mankind is divided into two sorts, the one believing, and the other unbelieving, and God chooses the believing sort; it is not election of persons, but of qualifications. God does, from all eternity choose to bestow eternal life upon those who have a right to it, rather than upon those who have a right to damnation. Is this all the election we have an account of in God's word?" "God, in the decree of election, is justly to be considered as decreeing the creature's eternal happiness antecedently to any foresight of good works, in a sense wherein he does not in reprobation decree the creature's eternal misery, antecedently to any foresight of sin; because the being of sin is suppo-

sed in the first place in order to the decree of reprobation, which is, that God will glorify his vindictive justice, and the very notion of revenging justice, simply considered, supposes a fault to be revenged. But faith and good works are not supposed, in the first place, in order to the decree of election."—*Miscel. Obs.* pp. 150, 162.

DR. HOPKINS. "The elect are not chosen to salvation rather than others, because of any moral excellence in them, or out of respect to any foreseen faith and repentence, or because their moral characters are in any respect better than others. The difference between them and others, in this respect, whenever it takes place, is the fruit and consequence of their election, and not the ground and reason of it. All mankind are totally sinful, wholly lost, undone, in themselves infinitely guilty and ill deserving. And all must perish forever, were it not for electing grace; were they not selected from the rest and given to the Redeemer, to be saved by him, and so made vessels of mercy prepared unto glory."—*Hopkins' System*, Vol. II, 143, 151.

DR. SMALLEY. "The scripture doctrine of election I understand to be this; that a certain number of mankind, including all who will actually be saved; were chosen of God to salvation from all eternity; in such an absolute manner, that it is impossible any one of them should finally be lost." "It is a wrong notion of the doctrine of election, to suppose that God's choice of persons as the heirs of grace and glory, was grounded on his foreknowledge of their faith and works." "If he foresaw that any number of them would cordially believe and obey the gos-

pel, it must be because he determined to put such an heart in them. Consequently, his electing them to eternal life, could not be grounded on his foreknowledge of their doing the things required, in order to their salvation; but his foreknowledge that they would do these things, must have been grounded on his purpose to give them effectual grace, working in them to will and to do, of his good pleasure."—*Smalley's Sermons*, pp. 260, 264, 266.

DR. GRIFFIN. "The only question is, what does God perform? What does he accomplish by positive power? What does he permit? If it is a fact that he changes one sinner, and permits another to take his course to ruin, he always intended to do the same." "The doctrine of election, thus necessarily deduced from that of regeneration, is abundantly supported by the word of God. There we are distinctly taught that God eternally elected a part of mankind, not on account of their foreseen holiness, but to holiness itself."—*Park Street Lectures*, pp. 174, 175.

DR. WOODS. "Whenever God first makes men holy, he must do it without regard to any goodness in them. He can look at no works of righteousness which they have done, but must act from the impulse of his own infinite love. And we are to view the purpose of God in relation to this subject, as in all respects corresponding to his acting. It seems then perfectly clear, that God did not determine to regenerate men or make them holy, from any foresight of repentance, faith, or good works, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto. The first production of holiness cannot surely have respect to



any previous holiness."—*Reply to Dr. Ware*, p 157.

I might easily multiply quotations. But these may be regarded as a fair specimen of the views which have been uniformly entertained of this doctrine by New England Calvinists.

And now, my dear brother, having protracted this series of letters much beyond my original intention, I propose, for a season at least, to relieve your patience, and that of your numerous readers to whom they have been given through the press. My object has been to give you a plain, unvarnished narration of facts relating to matters of great interest at the present day. The story is, in many respects, a painful one, but it seems important that the truth should be known. I have stated nothing as fact, of which I have not either personal knowledge, or information from sources in which I repose the fullest confidence. Should it hereafter appear that I have fallen into any mistakes, I shall esteem it not only a duty but a privilege to correct them. While I have felt it my duty to speak freely of the opinions of living men, I have intended to do it with kindness and candor. I certainly am not conscious of any unfriendly feelings towards those brethren from whom I differ in opinion. My prayer is that we may yet see eye to eye, and again lift up our voices together in defence of *the faith once delivered to the saints*.

Yours very affectionately.





Stephen M. M. M.  
No. 113.

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